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THE JANUARY GIRL

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BY JOSLYN GRAY

ROSEMARY GREENAWAY

RUSTY MILLER

ELSIE MARLEY, HONEY

KATHLEEN'S PROBATION

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



“Well, if you don’t like some one, and simply can’t, isn’t it wrong to pretend to?”

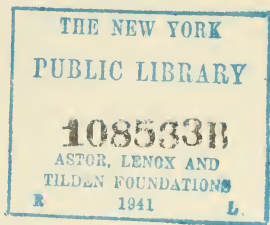
THE JANUARY GIRL

BY
JOSLYN GRAY

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1920



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**TO
THE CHRISTMAS GIRL
JEAN**

C. D. TRANSFER FEB 20 1947

ILLUSTRATIONS

<p>“If you don’t like someone, and simply can’t, isn’t it wrong to pretend to?”</p> <p>“Well then, I will,” she said softly, and though there were tears in her eyes, he had no idea that genuine self-sacrifice was involved . . .</p> <p>“You are not dumb, Rosemary, you are just silent, sweetly silent”</p> <p>Rosemary spent all her time out of school at Jan’s bedside</p>	<p><i>Frontispiece</i></p> <p><small>FACING PAGE</small></p> <p>30</p> <p>132</p> <p>206</p>
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THE JANUARY GIRL

CHAPTER I

IN other respects than her rather flamboyant name, Janice January, who entered the junior class at the academy at New Year's, was quite unlike the other girls of Greenwich Town. They were soft-voiced, smooth-haired, plainly-dressed children of careful upbringing, born, like one or both parents, in the homogeneous, well-to-do, and perhaps rather complacent country town. Janice, who was born in New York City, and had lived in four different states, coming hither from the Middle West, was a young lady at barely sixteen. Her clothes followed the prevailing fashion so nearly as to be absurd; her bronze hair was waved and puffed and piled high on her head; the boots she wore to school had high heels not so large round at the bottom as a silver quarter-dollar, and were laced with white; and her hats might have been termed "impossible" with little exaggeration. Her voice, though good in quality, with something staunch and true ringing through it, was rather loud, and she could have given the slangiest boy in school points in



that particular field of expression. Her manners were unconventional to the extreme.

Tall and slender, the girl's fearlessness—which some people called boldness—gave her a certain buoyancy and grace; and despite the disguises and exaggeration of her dress, she was undeniably handsome. Unusually and maturely intelligent, she was, too, warm-hearted and impulsive, with a sense of humor rare at her years; while her breezy good nature made amends in great measure for her want of manners. And though, coming as she did from a good-sized city to a country town, the January girl had confidently expected to impress the girls and boys with her "style," her elegance and her wide knowledge of life, all that had really been only secondary in her mind. She had hoped eagerly to make warm friends of her school-mates and to share in the rural sports and enjoyments which she supposed took the place of the excitements of city life as she had known it.

How the girl might have fared otherwise, it would be difficult to state, though such warmth and generosity of nature as were hers are a force to be reckoned with at all times. As it was, the January girl encountered, from the moment of her first appearance among the sixty-odd pupils of the old academy, an opposition, an antagonism, indeed, that might have dismayed one of thrice her years. For the girl who was truly, though unawares, not only the leader of her own class, but in many ways of the whole school, recoiled with genuine and instinctive antipathy from

the new scholar who became a member of her class. Rosemary Greenaway, the girl whom warm-hearted Janice singled out and loved from the moment she laid eyes upon her, considered the newcomer vulgar. And though she did not, indeed, proclaim her opinion, it never occurred to her to conceal it.

Rosemary was utterly unlike other girls, distinguished not so much by her extraordinary beauty as by her peculiar temperament. Until this, her third year in the academy, she had had little or nothing to do with her schoolmates. She had been with them, but not of them. She had lived a life apart, first as the close companion of her father, Roger Greenaway, the poet, and later, during the two years following his death, as the mourner, the bereft daughter of the poet, the guardian of his memory. As such, she had not needed nor wanted the society of girls and boys of her own age. Though too gentle for scorn, she had held herself apart from any such companionship, and her attitude had been taken for granted as being natural and appropriate in the one child of the poet who had resembled him, or who had meant anything to Roger Greenaway.

At the beginning of this school year, however, the girl had started out anew with the determination to mingle with her classmates and to be one among them. The determination had not, probably, come about through any newly-awakened desire for their companionship. When one reaches the age of fifteen without any experience of association with one's fel-

lows, one does not commonly desire or appreciate it afterwards. And Rosemary had become by second nature a recluse. But she knew that her step-father desired it for her above all else; and Rosemary, who, once she had become reconciled to his holding the place of her father, worshipped her stepfather with the intensity of a sensitive, reserved and solitary nature, had become exceedingly, almost painfully anxious to act in accordance with his wishes. Wherefore, she had conceived the resolution, and had made continual effort to carry it through.

The effort had been considerable in the first place, the association painful, and a strain for some time. But the response she had met had been so spontaneous and hearty and genuine, that the matter had become simpler, the effort required inconsiderable, so that by New Year's Rosemary was more or less unconcerned in regard to it. Her schoolmates had always regarded her wistfully and admiringly from afar; she had been like a royal personage to them. Wherefore, they had instinctively felt honored and flattered by her new graciousness, and regarded and treated her very much as if she had, indeed, been a princess in their midst.

In these circumstances Rosemary might easily have become a tyrant, a despot. That she did not, was not particularly to her credit, for it was due to indifference. She rather liked the homage she received; unconsciously, the proud, strong-willed, sensitive nature she had inherited from her poet-father craved

appreciation, devotion. But it was hers freely and continually; and presently she had become accustomed to receiving it as a matter of course, and was making no effort herself,—was, indeed, taking little active part in the school life except in connection with her studies. At the time Janice January came to Greenwich Town, Rosemary was a listless, nonchalant princess royal, ruling through indirection rather than by determination.

Even if Rosemary Greenaway hadn't been a pupil at the academy, the girls of the upper classes would have had to make a certain allowance for the January girl before they could have welcomed her among themselves. Greenwich Town was an old-fashioned community, and such were the standards of up-bringing that prevailed, that any girl older than twelve or thirteen must have been at least mildly shocked by this young lady of sixteen. Consequently when Jane Clement, who was nearer being intimate with Rosemary than anyone else (though that was still far from intimacy) appealed to her for her opinion, and Rosemary languidly pronounced the stranger vulgar, the question was closed. The girls in both upper classes followed Rosemary like sheep, and the January girl was relegated to Coventry without trial.

The boys, on the contrary, took to the jolly Westerner from the first, the greater number of them secretly admiring her smart costumes and her striking resemblance to figures on illustrated calendars and the covers of magazines. But they waited, perhaps uncon-

sciously, upon Ned Mitchell's demeanor. Ned was the leader among the boys of Greenwich Town, though in quite another manner from Rosemary's leadership among the girls. He had been a leader from primary school days, and he retained the position to-day because of the qualities which made him not only the most popular lad in the place but also the school-master's favorite among the boys and the one most like a friend to him.

In this particular case, however, Ned's judgment was warped. He couldn't help liking the January girl, and he was one of those who admired her smartness; but his respect for Rosemary's opinion amounted almost to awe. If Rosemary believed Janice January vulgar, then she must be so. And Ned couldn't risk lowering himself in Rosemary's regard by according the stranger more than courtesy demanded.

Wherefore, the January girl started out sadly handicapped. There was only one person connected with the school who was wholly well disposed towards her. That person was not, however, unimportant. It was, of course, only to be expected that Mr. Anstruther should welcome the new pupil cordially and be all kindness to her. As master of the academy, he could not do otherwise. And being what he was, it was natural that he should be pleasant to her in an unofficial way. And of course the girl *was* bright,—unusually so. But even those who had been and perhaps still were rather drawn to her themselves were highly surprised that Mr. Anstruther seemed to like her per-

sonally, quite irrespective of any sense of duty. And presently the other members of the class she had entered began to feel disappointed and even grieved to feel that the January girl imposed upon him,—that their beloved schoolmaster was taken in, deluded by the shrewd stranger. He who had seldom been moved to faint praise before, openly admired the stranger's audaciously brilliant recitations and apparently thought she had a wonderful way of her own of using her mind.

And the January girl traded on all this. In a body where the others, though they weren't aware of any rigidness of discipline, nevertheless definitely minded their p's and q's, Janice January behaved as she liked. She wasn't nearly so respectful to Mr. Anstruther as she should have been to any older person,—much less to her schoolmaster. She was free and easy, more than once to the point of being distinctly saucy, and she evaded rules right and left. And it was quite apparent that she gloated over her insolence and her immunity from consequences.

Perhaps that was only natural, for she was never "held up." Somehow, Mr. Anstruther endured from her conduct he would never have tolerated in another. No one could understand how her insolence escaped him, as it seemed to do.

But it couldn't go on forever. Some day the January girl would do something so perfectly shocking that Mr. Anstruther would suddenly realize the whole situation and come down upon her heavily. And it

must be confessed that others besides Rosemary Greenaway, who adored her stepfather and hated to see him imposed upon, felt a certain righteous satisfaction in the prospect, as well as in the fact that when Mr. Anstruther was severe he was quite terrible.

"Daddy," said Rosemary one night at the supper table about three weeks after the January girl had joined the class, "I'd like to know what you'd do if you saw me chewing gum in school?"

Her stepfather glanced at her in amazement, then smiled.

"Unless I collapsed instantly from the shock of it, Rosemary, I should probably send you home as fast as you could go," he returned, "though I might do as they did with us boys in the grammar school. The teacher would call us up to the platform, if she caught us at any such business, and make us chew before the whole school. You might not think it was much of a punishment, and we laughed and pretended it was fun. But it wasn't. Dear me! To be made ridiculous in the eyes of the little girl you wanted to drag up all the hills on your sled!"

Rosemary smiled, too, but ruefully and almost reproachfully. It seemed to her that he must have seen that disgusting January girl chewing gum. And yet he was so nice to her! He really treated her just as if she were a grown-up friend. How could he disregard her insolence and vulgarity just because she was so quick to learn!

And even now, he didn't draw any inferences. Of course, Rosemary didn't mean that he should, though she wondered when he failed to do so. He gave himself up to a discussion with Jack and Sally, who wanted to know just where he had sat in the grammar school, and whether the girl he wanted to draw up-hill was mother. So Rosemary's "leading question" didn't lead to anything—so far as she knew.

CHAPTER II

IT was, however, a leading question. That evening when they were alone, Mrs. Anstruther turned to her husband.

"Thad, what did Rosemary mean by speaking of chewing gum?" she asked.

He sighed. "It was a slam at the January girl, I suppose," he said. "It seems to be in the air. I don't know what possesses those girls and boys. I believe every soul in the two upper classes feels distinctly and personally aggrieved because I don't squelch Janice January for her freshness."

"Is she really—er—*fresh*, Thad?" Mrs. Anstruther asked, hesitating over the word.

"I suppose she might be called so, Emily," he admitted. "The girl is warm-hearted and impulsive, and so bright and original that she's a distinct addition to the school. But she is, I confess, inclined to be saucy, though in a frank, rather likable way, and she's lawless, though innocently or thoughtlessly so. I haven't come down on her as I might have done otherwise, for two reasons. One is, that she hasn't had a fair chance. She had had practically the entire charge of her own up-bringing as well as that of her little sister. Her mother named her for the heroine of the novel

popular at the time of her birth, and apparently did little else for her, leaving her to her own devices while she gave herself up to gaiety. When little Enid was still a baby, the mother and father separated. Since then I believe the mother has died. The two girls have shared the wandering life of their father, who is a civil engineer. January's a good sort of chap and makes a lot of money, but hardly the one to be wise in the up-bringing of motherless daughters."

Mrs. Anstruther put another stocking on her darning ball.

"You said there were two reasons?" she suggested.

"Oh, yes. Well, the other is that the school children have somehow been very slow in getting acquainted with the new girl. I can't understand it. They're such good children, so sweet and friendly, and always so well disposed. And yet so far as I am able to judge, they seem to be rather distant with this girl. They keep her at arms' length,—a stranger."

"Perhaps it's shyness," she suggested. "Sally tells me that the January girl is a fashionable young lady, with high-heeled boots and her hair put up. The other children, you must remember, dear, are country boys and girls, still tied to their mothers' apron strings."

"Well, Emily, if it's that, it will wear off," he said hopefully. "That cheers me up. I haven't as yet tried to do anything about it myself except to let it be seen that I like the new girl first rate. I rather prefer to let the young people settle such things by themselves. But if you feel like it, Emily, you might

speaking to Rosemary,—just suggest that she might make an effort to be hospitable, you know. If she'd do that, I'm quite sure the ice would soon be broken."

Mrs. Anstruther stifled a sigh. Sweet and docile as Rosemary was, it wasn't somehow always easy to make suggestions to her.

"If you would propose it yourself, Thad, Rosemary would jump at the chance," she returned. "She's simply wild to do anything for you."

"I know. She's only too good and sweet. She's such a saint, I tremble lest we lose her. But this, you see, belongs to school, and, being her school-master, I rather hesitate to approach her with regard to it. At school, I try to treat her exactly as I do the others."

Mrs. Anstruther understood, and agreed to speak to her daughter. But Rosemary proved non-committal. As her mother had said, she was always longing to do something for her step-father, but this matter didn't present itself to her in that aspect at all. The girl felt convinced that if her step-father understood that the January girl was really vulgar, he wouldn't want her to have anything to do with her. For, innocently and unaware, Rosemary cherished the conception of vulgarity she had received from her own father,—that it is more reprehensible than wickedness. And, characteristically, as she hadn't in the first instance reserved judgment, so she didn't make any endeavor to examine the matter afterwards. Indeed, it never occurred to her to question the soundness of his instinctive decision. She not only endeavored to

avoid contact with the January girl, but she only looked at her or listened to her when it was unavoidable.

Nevertheless she disliked even to seem unwilling to comply with any wish of her step-father's, and the day after her mother had spoken to her she went to school feeling rather troubled. She was convinced that he would feel exactly as she felt in regard to this girl if he understood her as well. He was sensitive and he was in many ways fastidious. But in this instance he was blinded by his own goodness. Ordinarily, he was exceedingly keen-sighted—once, Rosemary had believed him to be uncannily so—and where he disapproved, he was unflinching. But this clever, showy girl had so imposed upon his goodness as to render him unaware of her speciousness and falseness.

However, she could not, of course, do so permanently. Sometime—presently, indeed,—he must discover her true nature. At that time he would be relieved and grateful to realize that Rosemary hadn't been deluded. But meanwhile? There was the rub! At present, he wished Rosemary to make an effort to make the stranger feel herself at home. He would not wish it, if he knew, and later he would regret it. And yet, how could she even for a short time—for a week—for a day—seem indifferent to his wishes?

It was impossible. Rosemary said to herself that she couldn't possibly face the thought of having her step-father ever so slightly displeased with her. She

couldn't bear to have him glance at her with even a shade of reproach in his eyes. She must make a martyr of herself for his sake. She must nerve herself for the tremendous effort of approaching this girl who made her shudder even from afar, and must somehow ingratiate herself with her. And afterwards, when he had come to understand, he would be gentle with her because she had obeyed even where obedience lay through fire and flood.

As she reached this decision, Rosemary was half way to the academy. Turning about suddenly, she hastened back, passed her own home, and did not slacken her pace until she reached the further end of the common. She did not know why she wished to get a glimpse at this moment of the memorial fountain which had been placed there the summer before in honor of her father. It was not that it wasn't graven on her heart in every lineament as indelibly as the inscription was cut in the stone. But it had become a sort of ceremonial with Rosemary Greenaway to betake herself thither in moments of deep emotion, whether pleasurable or painful. The shrine was the link between her past and her future. It was the bond between her love for her dead father and for her step-father. Visiting it was in a sense a sort of re-dedication of herself to what the monument meant to her:—the memory of a beloved father, and the beneficent strength and goodness of the man who was a second father to her.

To-day she lingered only a few moments. But

though her delay was so brief, and though, as she made her way back and glancing down the long, straight, white avenue and seeing it empty, began to run to make up time, the bell rang just before she reached the further corner of the brick wall. Her heart sank. She was out of her coat and tam-o'-shanter in a twinkling, but the schoolroom door was closed. She had to open it and walk across the floor to her seat before the whole school quietly seated, the while the school-master waited to read the Scripture with which the academy had been opened for nearly a century.

It was a singular anomaly in a most patient and exceedingly good-humored person, that an instance of tardiness irritated Mr. Anstruther as almost nothing else did. Such instances were indeed rare. Rosemary was not two minutes behind time; but more than half the school year had passed, and no one had come in late before.

She dropped weakly into her seat, the high color the exercise had given her deepening to crimson. Probably no one in the room was indifferent to it, but Janice January caught her breath and almost choked at the vision of loveliness her startled eyes beheld.

"Why, Rosemary, what kept you?" the school-master asked with reproachful surprise.

The color suddenly left the girl's face.

"Nothing kept me," she faltered. "Only—I forgot and—walked around."

Rather touched by her distress, Mr. Anstruther smiled kindly upon her before he proceeded with the reading. But later, as he put the mark against her name in the record-book, a bit of the irritation returned. When he so disliked tardiness, it was hard to have the single instance in this year's book from his own household. And perhaps the feeling lingered and he was a shade less patient than usual for the rest of the morning.

As for Rosemary, the girl was overwhelmed with distress. It was the first shade of reproach Mr. Anstruther's voice or manner had held for her since their reconciliation in the summer, and she was grieved out of all proportion. She did not consider that it wasn't her step-father but the school-master who had so spoken, and that he must, in any case, have said to her what he would have said to another pupil. She bore it as she bore all things, unduly hard. It was all she could do to keep back her tears.

She took out her algebra and tried to study, but the lesson seemed more puzzling than ever this morning. An excellent student in all else, mathematics was exceedingly difficult to Rosemary. Though she spent more time on her algebra than upon any three other studies, yet she was never sure of herself. She was the more sensitive in regard to her weakness because she realized that early neglect contributed much to her present deficiency in that regard. Her father, the poet, no mathematician himself, had despised the whole subject and had tactitly influenced his daughter

to feel that time spent upon it was wasted. Wherefore, lest it should reflect upon him, Rosemary strove to conceal the struggle she had constantly to make to keep up with the class; and her step-father remained unaware of the real situation.

When she failed utterly that day, accordingly, he took it for granted she had not studied the lesson.

Being sent to the blackboard to solve a problem similar to one given out, Rosemary wrote "Let $x =$ " and then stood motionless and helpless.

"Well, Rosemary, what does x equal—what must it stand for?" the schoolmaster asked.

Rosemary looked anxiously at the front blackboard where the problem was outlined. It seemed to be a question between cattle and corn, and she chose the latter, not so much at random as because her first thought was to say "cattle," and she never guessed right.

"The corn—the amount of corn," she faltered.

"Not at all," the school-master said decidedly. "You may as well take your seat. I am afraid you haven't put any time on the lesson for to-day. Otherwise you couldn't help stating this as it should be. Now you can't do that way, you know, and expect to get through. Your recitation was poor yesterday, also. Pray don't get careless, Rosemary, almost at the threshold of your senior year."

Mr. Anstruther turned to the next in order as they were seated alphabetically.

"Miss January, what does x represent?" he asked.

"The quantity of corn," the girl answered quickly—and audaciously; for if he had asked her a few moments before, she would have made the *cattle* the unknown quantity.

"What's that?" he exclaimed in amazement, for the January girl never made a slip in algebra. "Did I understand you to say the *quantity of corn*, Miss January?"

"Sure," said the girl pertly.

The schoolmaster's slate-colored eyes flashed fire, and the January girl knew in a twinkling that she had gone too far. But she was game. Rising to her feet, she didn't even venture to take time to go to the board, but began at once to solve the problem orally, before he could speak and "call her down."

The fire in his eye died out. The school-master did not interrupt the January girl. He quite understood the situation. The girl's impulse hadn't been merely bravado. It was an audacious act of generous partisanship. She thought he had been hard on Rosemary, and she had been constrained to take her part. However, she wouldn't be able to go through with it—to *bluff it out*, as she would no doubt put it—and she must take the consequences.

Nevertheless, Janice January did indeed go through with it, though the effort was not inconsiderable. Only an unusual intellect and a rare control of it could have accomplished what she did. She forced her mind to grasp the problem as she had stated it—to see it back foremost, as it were. And once grasping it, she held it

with almost fierce concentration, working the problem out consistently and with the economy of process of a finished mathematician, performing intricate computations mentally, lost to all else until she had reached the solution. Then she sank rather weakly into her seat. Drops of perspiration stood out on her brow and on her lips, but she grinned cheerfully.

The school-master, who had been lost in wonder and amazement, came to himself.

"First rate! Very good indeed, Miss January," he said warmly, with the enthusiasm of a scholar for the really masterly performance. And he glanced eagerly through the class as if expecting to see his admiration reflected in their countenances. Rosemary's flushed face arrested his attention. He sobered at once.

"O, Rosemary, would you have done it so if I had let you go on?" he asked quickly. Had he paused to reflect, he would have known that no other member of the class could have solved the example thus.

"No, sir," Rosemary faltered.

"Well, then, what reason did you have for twisting it about so?" he inquired.

"None," the girl owned. "I just guessed."

He smiled slightly, but Rosemary did not know it. Her eyes were on her book. Her cheeks burned hotly. The school-master rarely praised and seldom commended, and his enthusiasm over the January girl's performance seemed like denouncement of herself. Indeed, she felt as if the stranger had turned her step-

father against her permanently. And she knew that if he addressed another word to her, she would vex him and disgrace herself forever by bursting into tears.

Happily, no such thing occurred. The class was dismissed, and she waited the relief of recess in the comparative shelter of her own seat, where, though she couldn't see a word, she could keep her eyes upon her book.

Overwrought as the girl was, the bell startled her so that she shuddered at the sound. Rushing out of doors to cool her burning cheeks and endeavor to regain her self-possession, she evaded the others by going directly out without stopping for her jacket, though the day was very cold. But even as she took refuge in a little porch at the rear of the building leading to the stairs of the basement, she heard a step, and looking up saw to her utter dismay that the January girl was bearing down upon her.

CHAPTER III

ON the day after New Year's, Janice January, or Jan as she was always called, returned home from her first day at Greenwich Town Academy brimming over with enthusiasm. With a single exception, she exclaimed over and admired everybody and everything connected with the school, and she declared again and again that she never wanted to move again. She hoped they might live in Greenwich Town for ever. Indeed, she wished with all her heart that they had come hither two years earlier so that she could have entered the academy with *her* class, who were all simply perfect. She couldn't possibly imagine twenty classmates who could have been so altogether ideal. She only wished she had always been with them—all her school life. And she liked Mr. Anstruther so exceedingly well that it was simply terrible that she could only go to school to him a year and a half. She didn't know how she could ever bear to part with him when she should be graduated a year from next June.

Her family shared her delight and were all sympathy. She went over the whole story first with Enid, her little sister, and Libby, the colored woman who had been Enid's nurse and remained with the family as

housekeeper, and later, upon his return, with her father. Their sympathy wasn't, indeed, particularly understanding; none of the three was capable of entering into and really sharing Jan's enthusiasms, and none discriminated. Enid was shy and painfully timid, and usually appeared dazed at her sister's audacity. Libby was kindness itself, affectionate and motherly, but she admired Jan too warmly to be impressed by anything the girl had to say of others; and her father was very much the same. Tom January was handsome, intelligent, warm-hearted and good-humored, but he was more like a brother to Jan than a father,—and perhaps more like a younger brother than an elder. He was always eagerly ready for Jan's monologues when he came home at night, but he never judged and he seldom commented with any relevance. And when she had done and dinner was over, he buried himself in the evening papers until he had gleaned therefrom the news that appealed to him, after which he fell asleep over a book.

Jan never complained even to her secret heart over any want of genuine sympathy on the part of her family. Her nature was too generous for that, even had she been sensible of it. And yet, she must have discerned something of the sort, for she didn't once mention during the week when her enthusiasm continued to wax, the one person who had most impressed her and who appealed to her as no one had ever done before. She thought of Rosemary Greenaway constantly, she lay awake at night musing and

dreaming of her; but somehow she did not feel like speaking of her to anyone.

Jan was well disposed towards all mankind. She did not know what it was to dislike anyone who hadn't proved himself actually disagreeable. But she was too keenly intelligent not to possess discernment and discrimination, and abundant though her enthusiasm was, there were marked shades and gradations in her admirations. Her love of beauty, even though it took crude form in her personal adornment, was sound of foundation, and there was a romantic strain in her imagination; and Rosemary Greenaway, true daughter of a poet, with her rare, almost dazzling beauty, her grace, her melancholy charm, had at once and forever taken her heart by storm.

For a week, Jan's day dreams continued rosy. She felt that she was about to be happier than she had ever been before. A phrase from Coleridge which she had cherished rather wistfully in memory since she had first heard it seemed to acquire new significance as she watched Rosemary and dwelt upon thoughts of her. The January girl innocently concluded that at last she had found what she had always looked forward longingly to,—her "heart's best brother."

By the end of the first week, however, her confidence had been shaken. During the second week, she felt dazed, incredulous. At the beginning of the third, something of understanding came upon her perforce; and by that morning when she followed Rose-

mary Greenaway around to the little porch at recess, Jan's illusions had mostly taken flight. She didn't now, as she lay in her bed at night, see herself walking down the long avenue after school arm in arm with Rosemary, deep in confidential talk; instead, she pictured scenes wherein she won, in stirring, heroic fashion, the proud girl's respect and friendship. Usually, it came about through her saving Rosemary's life,—sometimes, when the other girl had seemed particularly frigid and inaccessible during the day, at the cost of her own.

None the less, the January girl was possessed of a good measure of common sense, and by daylight she did not scorn such an opening as Rosemary's failure in algebra seemed to give her. She made up her mind before class was over just what she should do. But seeing how hard Rosemary bore her slip so touched her that she forgot herself and the practical aspect of the situation. And it was purely warm, girlish sympathy which sent her after the other girl in such haste that she, too, went without a jacket.

"Rosemary," she said softly as the instinctive startled look on the lovely flushed face hardened to hauteur, "don't you want—I mean, don't you think it would be sort of nice if you and I studied our algebra together to-night? Won't you come to my house after school, please?"

Had she suggested an expedition for highway robbery, Rosemary could scarcely have been more startled nor more shocked.

"Thank you, Miss January, but I couldn't possibly come," she said coldly. "And anyhow, I prefer to get my lessons by myself."

"But perhaps—O, I thought possibly I might—help you. Algebra comes so easily to me," Jan said humbly. "O, Miss Greenaway, I hated to have you—get sort of rattled, you know; and dear me, I'd rather get the dickens myself than to have Mr. Anstruther blow you up as he did. I am—you see I'm used to that sort of thing."

The flush in Rosemary's cheek deepened. Her soft eyes flashed.

"What is it to you, pray, whether I fail or not?" she demanded. "And Mr. Anstruther—my father—never—scolds. If he weren't the best man that ever lived he would have—expelled you from school long ago, the way you act!"

She turned and fled into the building. For a few moments the January girl stood as if stunned. Then she, too, went back into the academy. But she went through the corridor and opened the inner door leading to the basement. Crouching on the dark stair, she pressed her hands to her eyes, endeavoring to keep back the tears. Jan was proud in her way, and no one was ever allowed to see tears in her eyes.

She heard the bell ring, but she was powerless to move. She felt as if she could never go back into the schoolroom. Then as it came to her that Mr. Anstruther would only be relieved, as it would rid him of the bother of expelling her from his precious

flock, a flash of wrath dulled the pain in her heart. No longer fearing to cry, she emerged from her covert, banged the door, and striding through the corridor, entered the main schoolroom ten minutes late. With her head high, she walked coolly to her seat with the eyes of everyone upon her.

"Why are you late, Miss January?" the schoolmaster inquired gravely, though too kindly to suit the listening ears.

The January girl shrugged her shoulders, saying to herself that she hoped she *should* be expelled from the blooming place.

"Did you hear my question?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir," she returned.

"Then be kind enough to answer it," he said.

Again she thought of Rosemary's words.

"Because I took a notion to be," she said insolently.

Whether or not the January girl herself was frightened, the heart of every other pupil in the room beat more quickly. Mr. Anstruther merely asked her to remain after school, and went on with his class; but everyone was thankful not to be in her shoes. And Rosemary, though abstractly content that justice was to be done, shuddered for her.

The schoolmaster didn't look at Janice again, nor call upon her to recite when she had a class. Neither did she turn to left nor right nor open a book. Her head high, her cheeks flaming, she sat motionless until school had closed and the others had gone. Then she met his eyes with fierce defiance in her own.

CHAPTER IV

JANICE JANUARY set her lips stubbornly as the school-master left his desk and came down to her seat.

"I have about a quarter of an hour's work to do in the laboratory, and shall have to ask you to wait a little, Janice," he said kindly. "I wonder if you would feel like tidying up the top of my desk meantime? It's in such a state that I don't know where to lay my hand on anything."

"O, Mr. Anstruther, I'd just love to if you don't mind having it done by such a mean, horrid, hateful thing as I am," the January girl cried, smiling deprecatingly through her tears.

He drew out his watch. "See what you can do in fifteen minutes," he said, "and then we'll talk things over."

When he returned the desk was a marvel of order. Before he could speak the January girl began to pour out her apologies.

"O, Mr. Anstruther, I'm so sorry and so frightfully ashamed of myself," she declared earnestly. "You've been so good to me,—so perfectly splendid—right along, that I don't know what got into me to act and speak so."

"Well, I can tell you, Janice," he said simply. "You were vexed with someone else, and tried to take it out on me. It's a common and human thing to do, though rather hard upon the innocent party. I don't, however, believe it's like you. I believe you to be one whose impulse is to play fair."

Those words warmed the girl's sore heart.

"I shouldn't have acted so if I hadn't been furious, and I never will again," she assured him. The flush in her cheeks deepened as Rosemary's words came back to her.

"I shouldn't wonder if I had been a heap of trouble to you ever since I came?" she faltered.

He smiled kindly.

"No, Janice, no such thing," he returned firmly. "Your interest in your studies is a real pleasure to me. I own, I should like to see you rather more careful and thoughtful, to have you remember that in the democracy of a schoolroom each has to give up something of personal liberty for the good of the whole. And before long, I should have had to ask you to take more thought as to your manner of speech. It is one of the duties of youth, as it is, I believe, one of its privileges, to pay deference and respect to its elders and to those in authority. The soldier isn't ashamed of his prompt unswerving obedience, and deference to his superior officers is a matter of pride with him."

"It's right good of you to put it so," the girl acknowledged humbly. "If I'd known you before, I'd be better now. People always have laughed at me or

else called me down. I used to talk back to my other teachers because the boys thought it was funny and egged me on."

She drew a deep breath. "You see, *they*—liked me," she said with rather pitiful dignity, "boys and girls both. Here—they don't seem to—*take to me*."

Her high spirits had seemed to belie it. His heart ached for her. He hadn't supposed she had felt the coolness he had seen.

"When you once get acquainted, it will be all right," he assured her earnestly.

"But—how are we ever going to get acquainted, when we don't make any beginning?" she cried. "I've been here three weeks, and—I'm still a stranger."

As his wife's suggestion came to him, the school-master tried to disregard for the moment the girl's fine open brow, her clear, honest eyes, her humorous, understanding mouth and all her potential strength, and to observe the accessories that he so easily overlooked. He strove to see the January girl as others saw her. It was a difficult proceeding, for he had had little practise, but he was in a measure successful.

"If you don't mind my saying it, Janice, isn't your rather grown-up appearance, the way you dress and arrange your hair, and all that, a barrier, perhaps, against easy acquaintance? You don't look like a school-girl, you know."

Unconsciously, the January girl patted her puffed hair. Her smartness was precious to her. In other

schools she had attended, her companions had admired her the more because of her "style." But as she looked up from under her dark lashes, something wholesome and generous to the point of lavishness shone from her brown eyes.

"Would *you* like me better if I didn't put on any more style than the others?" she asked ingenuously.

He smiled. "I might not like you more or less, and yet I rather think it would give me a good measure of satisfaction," he owned. "I think I prefer to teach girls instead of young ladies."

"Well, then, I will," she said softly. And though she drew a deep sigh and there were tears in her eyes, he had no idea that genuine self-denial was involved.

He would have acknowledged, if questioned, however, that the January girl wasn't one to do things by halves. And truly, on Monday there seemed to be yet another new scholar in the third-year class. Janice appeared in the morning with her heavy chestnut hair parted in the middle, braided and hanging down her back. Her dark-green frock was as simple as Jane Clement's even if it were more graceful, and her low-heeled boots as comfortable as those of any of the boys. Far more attractive, now, and undeniably handsome, she didn't, perhaps, at first seem to the manner born, but for some little time had an air about her as of masquerading, with a peculiar charm about her that might have recalled one of Shakespeare's disguised heroines.



Though there were tears in her eyes, he had no idea that genuine
self-denial was involved

Rather appealing, too, the change in the January girl was, accompanied as it was by imitation of the manners and ways of the other girls, and the continuance of her frank and friendly advances towards them. And now Jan's classmates began insensibly to alter their attitude: in spite of themselves they were yet further drawn towards her. Had it not been for Rosemary's unchanged front, the January girl would have been taken at once into their midst. But they looked to her, and Rosemary, who, despite her beauty, had no vanity, and cared little for clothes, yielding utterly to her mother's taste, wasn't moved as they were by the transformation in the other girl's exterior. She knew vulgarity to be innate and incurable. Furthermore, she still smarted from that patronizing offer of aid with her algebra which was to have helped placate her father!

Wherefore, for some little time, matters were in unstable equilibrium. The school-master had privately told his wife that her suggestion had proved exactly right and quite successful; but his position prevented his judging nicely. After Jan had sloughed her peculiar clothing, the girls of the upper class were tolerantly kind to the January girl, and those in the lower classes effusively so. But the former were absorbed in their preparations for graduation, and the latter didn't really count. The girls in her own class alternated between coolness and grudging, constrained complaisance.

Ned Mitchell, who was a thoughtful lad and a great

favorite with Mr. Anstruther, began to feel the injustice of the situation, and to be conscious of remissness upon his own part. It seemed to him a fine and courageous thing for the January girl to give up her fashionable togs and adopt the simple dress of the other girls,—in his boyish way he had rather admired her “style.” He had high respect for her patience and pluck in the face of so much coolness, and couldn’t help responding himself to her friendliness. But he felt small to realize how half-heartedly he did so, especially if Rosemary were about, and how he kept away at moments when perhaps chivalry would have demanded friendly championship.

One afternoon at recess when he and Charley Clement, his chum, were making up a little group to go skating after school, he saw by the look on her face that the January girl understood what was going on and longed to be included. But Rosemary had given her rather reluctant consent to go, which made it absolutely impossible to ask Janice. And though it was a rare treat to have Rosemary with them, Ned almost wished he hadn’t asked anyone at all.

They went without her and that night the strained patience of the January girl gave way. When her father returned home from an adjoining town where he was superintending the construction of a bridge, he found his daughter in tears. Jan seldom wept and never allowed herself to be seen in tears, and he was quite at a loss. Finally she confessed that she couldn’t make friends in Greenwich Town as she had always

done in other places. Her classmates at the academy would have nothing to do with her.

“O, dad, won’t you move away from here?” she entreated. “I can’t stand it! I’d rather die than go through what I have to day after day. I eat the dust, but it doesn’t do any good. I shall just die if I have to stay here!”

CHAPTER V

WHY Jan, old girl, why didn't you tell dad before?" her father demanded, all wonder and consternation. "I supposed everything here was all hunky, sweetheart."

Tom January, who was tall, broad-shouldered and athletic-looking, might readily have been taken for Janice's brother. His rather round, boyish face with short, clipped mustache and twinkling eyes, might have been that of a merry college senior; and though he provided for his family like the excellent man of business that he was, he was little more to his children than a beloved play-fellow. Jan had ruled him almost from babyhood; and for some time now, he had looked up to her superior wisdom. Besides that, he thought her the handsomest, wittiest, brightest and most lovable girl in the world, and only hoped that little Enid would grow up to be just like her,—an utter impossibility, as the two sisters were almost exact opposites in all respects.

He had never known her to be *fazed*, as he put it, before. Upon the very rare occasions when he had seen her shed tears, it was over some hurt to Enid or the death of one of the many pets she always collected about her. Now he felt moved almost to tears

himself, as, sitting by him on the sofa, encircled by his arm, Jan told her pitiful story of finding herself, at the end of five weeks, still a stranger within the gates of Greenwich Town Academy.

Tom January couldn't conceive it. Jan reiterated her conviction.

"Then they're jealous of you, Jan," he declared. "It must be just that. Otherwise they wouldn't, blooming little hayseeds as they are, set themselves up against a girl that has had all the advantages of living in large cities."

Jan sat up straight.

"O, my goodness, dad! *They* jealous of *me*! If you could see them. And they're not hayseeds, either. They may not have any style, but it's because they're superior to it. The prettiest girl in school is a raving, tearing beauty, but she doesn't seem to know or care how she looks. She never glances towards the mirror in the cloakroom even to put on her hat."

January drew a deep sigh. It was beyond him!

"I reckon it's the Middle West for we, us and company," he said. "I'll finish this job and then we'll pull up stakes."

"But you've *bought* this house," protested Jan. "Isn't it the limit, dad, that the only house we've ever owned should be here in Greenwich Town! We just can't move."

He put the blunt tips of his fingers together and stared hard at them.

"You might go away to school?" he suggested drearily.

"Enid couldn't get along without me," she declared.

"Well, she might go too. She's ten years old," he proposed gruffly.

"And leave you all sole alone, dad?" the girl cried vehemently.

Tom January got up hastily and went to the window.

"Why not? I should worry, Jan," he remarked lightly, his back towards her.

But Jan ran to him and flung her arms about his neck. She was nearly as tall as he, and they were very much alike though she had a fire and spirit wanting in him.

"O, dad, not for the world!" she cried. "I'll try again. And after all I'd hate to go to another school and lose Mr. Anstruther right after I've found him. He's perfectly wonderful. He's like a whole academy and a college put together, he's so wise. And good!"—Jan sighed. "And he's got such a lovely way that, honestly, you'd think he was perfectly handsome. I'll just try to learn all I can and to please him. I'll be like the girl that wore her sacque to school wrong side out and couldn't take it off for fear she'd lose her luck.

'But while they jeered me I sat still
And learned my lessons with a will.'

That's what I'll do. And perhaps sometime they'll begin to see that really I'm right side out."

"Sure, Jan, they will. I'll tell you what it is. It's just New England, that's what it is. Greenwich Town is one of those aristocratic, home-talent villages that lives on the memory of its ancestors. But, believe me, they'll come round all right after a little. Perhaps you've been too friendly, Jan? These hard-shelled Easterners, you know, don't value the things that come easy to 'em. If it's only 'Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,' they won't whistle. Why don't you just sort of stand off and look 'em over as if you were sizing 'em up and weren't exactly sure whether they were as good as what you've been used to associating with? Hold up your head and pretend you're viewing them through a lorgnette, and the first thing you know, they'll be making the advances. They'll walk up to the dough dish without being called."

Jan hugged him gratefully, and pretended she felt cheered. But after he had taken up his paper, Tom January found that he wasn't so comfortable as he had thought he should be. He wondered vaguely whether Jan was grateful for his sagacity in solving the difficulty, or only for his good will. He was accustomed to save the sporting pages of the paper for the last as a tid-bit, but to-night he turned thither at once. Otherwise, he might as well have laid the paper aside.

He lost himself temporarily. But suddenly he stopped short in the midst of an account of festivities a certain baseball team was enjoying before going into training.

"Jan, old girl, I've got it at last!" he cried eagerly. "Listen to this! You give a party! What say? Shall we give a swell party and invite all your class and give 'em such a jolly evening that the ice will melt and never form again? That's really all there is to do, you know—melt the ice. What do you think about a party?"

"Gorgeous! simply gorgeous!" cried the girl eagerly. And the two began making plans at once, like the two excited children they were.

"I'm so glad we've got this great big house!" cried Jan. "And, O, dad, I'm perfectly delighted that it is our own, and that it's in Greenwich Town. It's so like a party that all I wonder is that every time I came home and looked it in the face, it didn't say 'party' right out—shout it. Enid can wear her little white silk and short socks and slippers and I—goodness me, I'll have to have a new gown that goes better with Greenwich Town. I haven't a thing that I could wear with my hair down my back,—they're all too fussed up."

"Get what you like, Jan," her delighted father bade her.

"And you, dad,—can I get you into evening clothes, old sport?"

"Jan, darling, I'm mighty sorry, but I have a pressing engagement out of town that night. You'll let me off, won't you?" he begged in genuine alarm.

"O, I suppose I shall have to," Jan rejoined gruffly. "By the way, what night is it?"

January glanced at the calendar.

"Next week Saturday—Washington's Birthday," he said promptly. "That would give you almost two weeks to get ready. How'd that strike you?"

Jan considered. "Perhaps Friday would be safer," she concluded presently. "I don't know people yet, and though I should suppose everybody'd have to get home awfully early from a party, still if it was Saturday, and someone should happen to linger and the clock should strike twelve, and it was Sunday, they would think it was a crime. I reckon Friday's the only day to have a party in Greenwich Town. I should never dare to have one in the middle of the week on account of Mr. Anstruther. He's a perfect dear, but he thinks school is simply frightfully important. And—O, Mr. January, your engagement being on Saturday, I suppose I may count on you?"

"My dear, awfully sorry, but the Friday engagement is still more pressing. The Saturday one, being on a holiday, might have been postponed. But the Friday one—never! However, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send over the best orchestra in Longfield to make up."

Again Jan considered. And again she felt constrained to demur.

"I don't believe we had better risk that either, dad," she concluded regretfully. "If it's all right to dance, and they want to, I'll play for them."

"But Jan, what's the party for, anyhow?" her father reminded her. "If they dance, of course you must

dance with 'em. Your dancing will knock the spots out of all of them, believe me!"

Jan wasn't impressed. "Well, Libby could relieve me at the piano, so far as that goes," she said. "She doesn't play the very latest dances, but neither would anyone here dance them. For example,—there's Jane Clement. I don't suppose she ever even heard of even a two-step."

Libby was called in. She was full of music and when she had first come to live with the Januarys had played remarkably by ear. Since then she had had more or less assistance from the children's music teachers, and was better for social occasions of an informal sort than many professionals. She was all eagerness to do her part not only in regard to the music but in the other preparations for the party. Easy-going and rather indolent, except where Enid was concerned, Libby delighted in festivities of all sorts, and now she entered into the discussion like another child in her enthusiasm, only more practical as to ways and means. And together, the three finally evolved plans that were fairly definite and business-like. And the next day but one, the invitations to the January girl's party were out.

Mr. Anstruther received one with the members of the class, though it was understood that he never attended any festivities of the young folk except those connected with commencement at the academy in June. The party being appointed for Friday night, however, he quite approved of it and thought it a

pretty courtesy on the part of the January girl. For things had looked to him so much better in that quarter of late that the school-master, who had never altogether realized how bad they had been, supposed everything to be quite normal at this time and that Janice had found her place.

It didn't even occur to him that Rosemary was less cordial to the newcomer than to any other among her classmates. At best, he knew his step-daughter to be very reserved, and he took it for granted, without, perhaps, any special consideration of the matter, that her manner was the same towards Janice as towards the others.

The evening after the invitations were out, as he came into the living-room where Rosemary was studying, as she looked up from her book, he asked her whether she would not like a new gown for Janice's party.

"O, no, daddy," the girl rejoined so emphatically that he laughed. He supposed that the idea of spending so much money as the gown would cost shocked her. He knew that Rosemary was still troubled because of the large sums he had had to pay to cover her father's debts, which had postponed indefinitely the rehabilitation of the old family estate of the Anstruthers which he had much at heart. But he had already said so much to the girl on the subject, had protested so vehemently and so often against her oversensitiveness, that he had become sensitive himself and

wouldn't go into it at this time. He feared that if he mentioned the matter again he might lose his patience and reproach her for not trusting him sufficiently to take him at his word.

CHAPTER VI

JACK GREENAWAY, who had heard his sister's emphatic refusal to have a new gown for the party, understood the situation better than his father. Since New Year's he and Enid January had become fast friends. Jack was a sturdy, happy-go-lucky boy who had hitherto had nothing to do with any other girls than his sisters; but he had never before been so happy with any companion as now with Jan's pale, timid, picturesque, blonde little sister whom someone had rather happily likened to an Iceland poppy. Of late he had been constantly at the January house, and had gathered a vague impression that Jan wasn't happy at school. He admired her exceedingly, and had thought what a very happy arrangement it would be if Jan and Rosemary should become as friendly as he and Enid were.

Rosemary was working over her algebra. Jack knew how hard it was for her and wouldn't interrupt her. But when she had finished an example, he said softly: "You *like* Jan, don't you, Rosemary?"

Rosemary glanced towards their father, who was apparently buried in a review.

"No, Jack, I don't," she returned quietly.

Anstruther started suddenly.

"Why, Rosemary, why not?" he asked in great surprise.

"Because she's so——" Rosemary hesitated. She didn't dare say *vulgar* with his eyes on her in that way. The lovely color deepened in her cheeks. She cared so deeply for her step-father and dreaded so sensitively his slightest disapproval, that she longed now, as ever, to say just what he would want her to. But she couldn't tell an untruth.

"Daddy," she protested warmly, "I couldn't possibly like a girl that boasted at school of cheating in another school that she went to, as if it was something funny!"

His face grew grave.

"O, Rosemary, don't you know that you shouldn't have said that to me!" he protested. "In any case you ought not to repeat idle chatter as if it were solemn assertion; and in this particular instance, you ought to have considered that I am Janice's school-master and yours. You might have prejudiced me against her unfairly. It's almost like telling tales."

"O, daddy, don't say that!" the girl cried deprecatingly, the distress in her face and voice so evident that he wondered. He could never accustom himself to his step-daughter's intensity and sensitiveness. Sometimes he told himself that the fact was, she was so good and docile that he expected perfection of her, and lost his patience at anything less. At other times, he wasn't so sure.

"I didn't mean to be cross," he said gently. "You

understood why I spoke so positively, didn't you? I love to have you frank and open with me; only we both have to bear constantly in mind the fact that I'm your stern school-master as well as your devoted friend."

"And my dear father," she added gently. And somehow, he took it for granted that the difficulty with regard to Janice was straightened out at the same time. He would have been surprised, indeed, to know how the girl's heart ached all through the evening, and how she cried herself to sleep. And her dislike of the January girl deepened into resentment and became more personal.

From that time until the day of the party, she lived in constant dread of his mentioning the subject to her, and possibly bidding her go. But the day came and he hadn't spoken and she breathed freely.

Ned Mitchell came to her at recess that afternoon.

"Going to-night, Rosemary?" he asked.

"Where, Ned?" she asked, then colored, for she knew.

"To Miss January's party."

"O, no," said Rosemary with some surprise. Then recollecting how her step-father felt, she said gently: "Daddy's going over to Longfield right from school and won't be back until late, and I think I'll stay with mother."

"There's Jack and Sally," he observed. "But perhaps, Rosemary, you wouldn't be going anyhow?"

Ned spoke wistfully. He wanted much to have her

go to the party, and not for his own sake. But he couldn't bear to seem to question her decision.

"No, Ned, I don't suppose I should," she said gently. "I can't just explain, but really, it would be wrong for me to go."

"I understand," he said loyally. "Well, we're all going skating to-morrow afternoon. I'll stop for you as I go by."

"All right," she said rather acquiescently than eagerly, but Ned was more than satisfied.

When his chum, Charley Clement, asked him directly after school if he were going to the party, Ned said coolly: "No, old man, skating for mine, long's it lasts."

Then remembering an errand he should have done, he turned and went back to the main street, passing the academy. Presently he overtook the school-master on his way to the station.

Ned, who worshipped Mr. Anstruther, took secret delight in the fact that the school-master seemed to like him best of all the boys in school.

"O, Ned," said Anstruther, then stopped. About to ask the boy to go along with him, he suddenly remembered that this was the day of the January girl's party. "All ready for the party, I suppose?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes, sir," returned Ned quickly. "I mean—that is, no, sir. I don't believe I'll go."

The school-master stared at the tall slender stripling, who was the picture of health.

"Not going to a party! Why, Ned, why not?" he asked in genuine amazement.

"I—I hardly know; no particular reason, don't you know, Mr. Anstruther. I—just thought I wouldn't," stammered the boy. And he colored to the roots of his thick brown hair.

Possibly the fact that the school-master had no time to lose, quickened his power of apprehension. In any event, he jumped to a conclusion that wasn't far from correct, except that it didn't involve Rosemary.

"Ned Mitchell, take care that you don't do anything that will make you feel like a cad afterwards," he said very gravely. "It's a big risk. Good night."

He turned into the street that led to the station, leaving Ned stunned and almost breathless. But by the time he was out of sight, the boy came to himself in a wave of gratitude. What if he hadn't happened to overtake Mr. Anstruther? He was thankful indeed to have escaped being a cad, but perhaps he was equally thankful to have escaped being thought one by his hero.

His hero, meantime, had a troubled journey. He felt disappointed in Ned; and while he was puzzling over the question what had come over the lad, he was seized with apprehension as to the other members of the class, who were less thoughtful. He wished he had been sufficiently thoughtful himself to mention the matter of the party to some of them. But he told himself it had been only some freak on Ned's part of course; it was perfectly absurd to worry lest young

people stay away from a party. He knew his school children too well for that. It hadn't been easy to get them out of the habit of having festivities in the middle of the week. Yes, Ned had had a bee in his bonnet, as the boys would say.

It was nine o'clock when he reached home that night. Entering the living-room, he was amazed, almost horrified, to see Rosemary sitting with her mother.

"Rosemary Greenaway! Why aren't you at the party!" he exclaimed.

Rosemary grew very pale.

"I—didn't go, daddy," she said gently.

Staring at her, he saw that she was white.

"Are you ill, dear?" he asked anxiously.

She shook her head.

"Then why in the name of common sense didn't you go?" he demanded warmly.

"Why, daddy, I didn't—care about going," she said weakly.

"Rosemary has never cared so much about parties as most girls do," said her mother quickly.

"It isn't that," he said coldly. "I must say, Rosemary——"

He broke off abruptly. With his hand on the door, he said quietly to his wife: "I'm going out again, Emily. Don't sit up if I'm late, dear. Good-by."

CHAPTER VII

AS she heard the door close behind him, Rosemary clasped her hands almost wildly.

"Why, Rosemary, is that party to-night?" her mother asked wonderingly.

"Yes, mother."

"Well, why didn't you say something about it? You don't mean to say that you stayed at home just to keep me company?"

Rosemary confessed that she hadn't wanted to go.

"I am afraid father expected you to go," her mother remarked ruefully. "He seemed awfully disappointed."

"*Disappointed!*" echoed Rosemary. "If only it wasn't so much worse. He'll never forgive me and never forget it."

"Nonsense, Rosemary. He may have felt a bit vexed on the spur of the moment—as indeed he had reason to be," Mrs. Anstruther declared. "The January girl being a stranger, he naturally wanted you to do your part in making her welcome, and I suppose he feels your not going might seem to her a slight. I suppose it didn't occur to you that he would have been pleased to have you go?"

"Yes, mother, I knew he would," said Rosemary drearily.

"My dear child! Then I think you might have made an effort, even if you don't care particularly for parties. Are you so selfish that you aren't willing to put yourself out as much as that for father?"

"I'm willing to do anything in the world for father," rejoined Rosemary with tears in her eyes, "but he wouldn't have wanted me to go to that January girl's party if he knew how I feel about her. He wouldn't have me a hypocrite. Why, mother, I shouldn't *dare* to be a hypocrite with him, even if I wanted to be."

For some time Rosemary sat in silent agony. She didn't want to go to her room and be alone with her distress; she couldn't bear to leave her mother's presence. Yet she felt she couldn't endure seeing her step-father again that night. Indeed, she didn't dare to risk rousing his anger a second time, if it should have died out before his return. She wished that he had given some indication of the hour of his return, and tortured herself by wondering if she could catch his step on the walk in time to escape to her room.

"Mother, where did daddy go?" she asked hesitatingly.

"I haven't the least idea, Rosemary," Mrs. Anstruther returned.

"He wouldn't have gone—himself?"

"To the party? O, no. Daddy doesn't think it wise to do that sort of thing, and I'm thankful he doesn't. He's a slave to the school as it is."

Rosemary sighed. Then it was as she had thought,

as she had feared. He had just rushed out to—*walk*. He was so angry with her that he had had to fly from her presence and pace up and down the streets until he could become calm enough to contemplate what he considered her wicked behavior. That being the case, he must certainly not find her in the living-room whenever he should come in. And Rosemary bade her mother good night and flew to her room with almost guilty haste.

CHAPTER VIII

THE January girl's party accomplished the end designed, though in a quite unexpected manner. When the school-master arrived late and took them utterly by surprise, he found six members out of a class of twenty-one, with Janice white, hurt, and almost tragic in her grieved dignity. But his coming revolutionized everything. His mere presence would have meant much; and in that he exerted himself to transform the occasion from failure to success,—that one who pleased without effort put forth his utmost—the transformation was complete, and the success unqualified. All present, even poor, wounded Janice, declared they had never so enjoyed themselves. And no one exaggerated.

However, even if Mr. Anstruther hadn't come, if the party had been throughout as uncomfortable and constrained and almost painful as that first hour had been, the six who had attended said to themselves they would have been more than willing to go through it. For, such had been the uncertainty and indecision that when they had left the academy that afternoon, though certain members of the class were known *not* to be going to the party, no one was known to have decided in the affirmative. And all the six having hesitated,

they held their breath at thought of what they had escaped when it got about through the school and in the town how shocked and indignant and grieved Mr. Anstruther had been over the defection of the others.

As for the other fifteen—it was many a day before they forgot the party, and many a day ere fourteen of them ceased to regret their attitude towards it. For they knew not only how severely their adored school-master judged them, but also how bitterly disappointed he had been in them. Large-hearted and affectionate, he was in reality like a father to his pupils; and when he appeared at school on the Monday following the party he showed that he had lost sleep over the affair,—which was more than a real father would have done, Joe Pitcher declared. And someone said that he had told his wife that he felt like resigning the day after the party, because if a class that had been with him since they entered the academy could do a nasty thing like that, he believed there must be something radically wrong with his teaching.

He didn't mention the matter to anyone excepting his wife, however, and somehow, no one ventured to speak of it to him. He was his usual kind self, only perhaps rather graver than usual; but some of the academy boys and girls felt when they met him on the street as if he were saying to himself, "There's one of those"—whatever name he gave them in his secret heart. The mother of the Clements, who had been among the absentees, declared that he ought to know how largely Rosemary was responsible for the

whole thing. But Jane protested that as it was it was bad enough for poor Rosemary to be classed among those whom Joe Pitcher called the Boycotters. And she confessed to Charley in secret that she was thankful that Rosemary herself didn't understand that she was responsible for any other defections than her own.

"If she dreamed how it was, she'd up and tell Mr. Anstruther the first thing, and he'd never forgive her, and that would simply kill Rosemary!" Jane declared. "The queer part of it is, he doesn't seem to have half so much patience with her now, as he used to have when she really hated him. I guess perhaps he did stand a good deal at that time. Rosemary doesn't say much, but I sort of infer."

"Well, I sort of infer that Mr. Anstruther isn't particularly forgiving, anyhow," remarked Charley, trying to be casual. "When once he gets down on anyone, there's the end of it. It's good-by, Susan Jane."

"Well, Janice January's in luck," commented Jane. "Mr. Anstruther seems to like her better than anyone in school—even Ned and Rosemary."

However that might be, certainly a great change had come over the January girl's fortunes. Even before the arrival of Mr. Anstruther on the night of the party, not only the sympathy but the admiration of six of her classmates had gone out warmly to Janice, and at the close of the evening they were all in a fair way towards friendship. And in part because the others (Rosemary always excepted) were truly ashamed and penitent, and in part from a desire to

placate their school-master, their attitude also changed appreciably. Realizing that if they were to work themselves back into Mr. Anstruther's good books, it must be through reparation, they began at once to endeavor to make amends; and a beginning being made, the rest was easy. And, after all, it was truly simpler as well as pleasanter to like Jan for her numerous and really attractive good qualities than it had been to hold out against her superficial defects. Furthermore, the girl had shed the latter so rapidly that there really wasn't much to overlook; and her drollness, her breezy good humor, her sweetness of disposition and lack of resentment or rancor, even of any appearance of triumph, when she was in the proud position of being championed by Mr. Anstruther himself, impressed the boys and girls deeply. Long before the Easter holidays, the January girl was taken for granted—a popular member of the class that was to be graduated a year from the coming June.

Rosemary, of course, still dissented. She was very quiet about it, however, and apparently didn't take it amiss when the others went over to the January girl in a body, as it were, any more than they had laid it up against her that they had been brought to a difficult pass. Rosemary had never been intimate with the others, had always been considered as one apart. She held the same place of distinction among them as formerly, and she bore herself as of old, when she was not keeping aloof because of the January girl. Her, she constantly ignored. When it was possible, she

evaded her advances; otherwise she repelled them with cold courtesy.

The January girl not only accepted the snubbing patiently, but she constantly put herself in the way of receiving it. She had spirit enough in other respects, but where Rosemary was concerned, Jan knew that she was abject. But she couldn't help it. She couldn't give up. Rosemary was in every way ideal to her mind. She was exactly the friend for whom Jan had secretly yearned ever since she could remember—the understanding friend to whom she could speak her most sacred and secret thoughts, and whom she could worship. There was such sweetness and goodness and earnestness in Rosemary's beautiful face, that Jan believed the coldness was wholly due to the loftiness of her ideals. She couldn't help hoping that if she were only good enough in school so as never to trouble Mr. Anstruther, if she toned down her movements and manners and didn't look so often in the mirror or think overmuch of dress, she might finally win Rosemary's toleration and later on perhaps her friendship.

For the time being, however, Rosemary was adamant. No one in the class had suffered so keenly under Mr. Anstruther's disapproval concerning the affair of the party as his step-daughter; yet she was the one person who put forth no effort to make amends. As a matter of fact, it never occurred to the girl that she could do any such thing. She couldn't have gone to the party without being a hypocrite,

and though it was quite terrible to suffer her step-father's displeasure, the consciousness of deliberate wrong-doing must, she felt, have been far worse.

A coldness, slight but definite, had fallen between them. The affair of the party had never been mentioned. Anstruther was deeply disappointed in Rosemary and waited for her to speak. When the days passed, and she had not a word to say for herself, he began to lean towards his former opinion, that she was a spoiled child, and, despite her real sweetness, a stubborn and rather self-righteous young person. Consequently, though Rosemary was untiring in her effort to please him, and so meek under criticism or reproach as to be quite martyr-like, she not only failed to accomplish her purpose, but constantly vexed him. For now he couldn't help being aware of her bearing toward the January girl, contrasted as it was with the friendliness of the others; and in that she knew that she could in no way displease him more, her sweetness and docility seemed merely impertinence.

On her part, Rosemary never blamed him. She suffered keenly but patiently, never losing her temper. Her step-father didn't understand, she said to herself. He acted as always, right, but as he saw it. And even when he was patently unfair, she didn't complain, even in the depths of her heart. For if she didn't merit it now, she deserved far worse because of the past.

CHAPTER IX

MEANWHILE Rosemary had more or less unconsciously fallen back into old habitudes. Again she had become a recluse. Forgetting or disregarding her determination to be a school-girl among others, to share the interests and pleasures of her classmates, she retreated gradually into that state of solitariness wherein she had dwelt from the death of her father to the day when the memorial fountain erected in his honor was dedicated in the presence of an assembly of his friends. There was a difference in her attitude, however. She didn't now so much refuse the importunities of the others as evade them. She slipped away directly school was dismissed for the day, and she seldom reached the building with more time to spare than sufficient to remove her wraps and get into her seat. And somehow the others ceased to regard her company on Saturday expeditions as a possibility.

They felt a sense of loss, but it was less distinct than it would have been had the change in her attitude not been so gradual. Moreover, it wasn't, after all, a great change. Rosemary had never seemed one of them, and scarcely anyone was aware of the moment when her unobtrusive withdrawal from association became complete.

Ned Mitchell, however, was an exception. He had realized every fluctuation and alteration in Rosemary's demeanor as it had occurred, and he understood the cause distinctly where the others held it vaguely in the background of their minds. Of course everyone (Jan herself, not least) was aware of the fact that Rosemary did not care for the January girl; but as she had no warm liking for any one of them after eight or nine years' association in school life, it was, after all, small cause for wonder that she did not take readily to a stranger who was in all ways her very opposite. Ned alone knew that Rosemary's feeling against the new classmate was stronger and far more positive than indifference; and he believed that she avoided the others solely because she feared contact with or even mention of the January girl.

He never blamed Rosemary. Ned believed, rather naïvely, that the poet's daughter was truly of finer grain than anyone else in school, and he realized that it was probably impossible for her ever to come sufficiently near to Janice to appreciate her good qualities. He believed that Rosemary mistook, but that she couldn't help mistaking. He thought it a great pity, but it seemed to him to be final.

For himself, liking Jan frankly, Ned bore himself accordingly. Constantly, beginning with the party, he had risked Rosemary's disapproval, but apparently the girl didn't lay it up against him. When chance brought them together, she seemed unchanged. But chance rarely brought them together, and effort on

his part, not oftener. Wherefore, in that a coolness had fallen, since Jan's party, between himself and his lifelong friend, Charley Clement, Ned Mitchell was sober and serious beyond his wont during the weeks of the late winter.

The friendship between the two boys had always been a matter of comment and surprise to everyone excepting Charley's doting mother. Ned had always been such a manly lad, so full of life and vigor, and from his grammar-school days so maturely intelligent, that older people wondered what he could see in Charley Clement, who was sensitive, shrinking, timid, and far more girlish than his sister Jane. Charley was bright, albeit in a juvenile, precocious fashion, being two years younger than Jane, and the youngest member of their class in the academy; but in manner he was exceedingly immature, and rather silly. Certainly, if he hadn't been Ned Mitchell's chum, he must have suffered constant teasing and bullying from other boys, and would never have preserved intact the half boastful, complacent self-possession that was now his—or had been, up to the night of the party. Since then, he had been rather a melancholy figure.

It was perhaps a fortnight after Washington's Birthday that the school-master became aware of something wrong with Charley. Anstruther liked the boy in the same fatherly way he liked all his pupils, even though he did not admire him. He felt, however, that Charley was not at all to blame for his unfortunate manner and attitude. Mrs. Clement had been most

unwise in his up-bringing. Indeed, she continued still, when Charley was in the third year of the academy, to make a baby of him. The school-master had done what he could as he went along in an endeavor to counteract the home influence, and he had felt that association with Ned must mean a great deal to the younger boy. Nevertheless, he had not seemed to see any improvement in Charley; and at this time when he was struck by the physical change in the boy, he was apparently as much a baby as ever.

Perhaps the fact only made him the more sympathetic, in that Charley was patently in trouble. On the day that his attention was called to Charley's pallor by the dark shadows under the boy's bright eyes, the school-master sat at his desk after school was dismissed, while the children were going their several ways. He rose and went to the window to look after Charley, who almost invariably went straight home after school. He was headed that way now, and his gait wasn't noticeably more lackadaisical than commonly, but the schoolmaster started, for he was walking with Jane alone. He couldn't remember ever seeing him leave the grounds before without Ned Mitchell.

He said to himself, however, that it might have happened twenty times before, nevertheless, or twice twenty, and he might have been unaware of it. But the next night it was the same. And when, on the following day, Jane and Charley were unaccompanied by Ned both at noon and at night, Anstruther realized

that something had happened. Something must have come between the boys.

In the first instance, as he thought it over, it seemed to him as if it might be better for Ned if the boys were together less. Charley wasn't at all the friend that a lad like Ned should have: he took everything and gave nothing. But as he pondered further, the school-master revised his judgment. Defending and protecting the younger, weaker boy from childhood must have been an element in Ned's manliness, and of course his generous giving was far better than undue receiving. The coolness must not endure. If the boys did not come together of themselves, they must be brought together.

He waited a little, and seemed to find that the latter alternative must be adventured. He made up his mind to speak to one or both of the boys, but wasn't sure which to approach first. It would be comparatively simple, he knew, to learn from Charley just what had happened. None the less, he presently made up his mind to go first to Ned. As he came to the decision at the academy one night, and would have set forth at once in search of the boy, he was interrupted. And then the matter was in abeyance for a fortnight longer.

As he was gathering up some papers to take home, his wife appeared at the door with the January girl, Mrs. Anstruther with an anxious face, Jan pale with terror.

CHAPTER X

SOME time earlier, Rosemary, who had flown home the moment school was dismissed, and had betaken herself at once to her own chamber, as she sat idly by the window, saw the January girl coming down the street on the side towards the house.

Shrinking instinctively, Rosemary controllèd herself proudly and stared stonily at the figure approaching so swiftly. When the January girl went to the post office, or anywhere, indeed, in this direction, she invariably walked on the other side of the avenue. It looked as if she were coming in, therefore, but of course it couldn't be. Why, pray, should she come in?

To her amazement, however—to her horror, indeed,—the January girl stopped at the front gate and hesitated a second. But it was only a second, and then she went on. Rosemary would not believe that she had gone round to the side door until she heard that gate click. A moment later and the thud of the brass knocker resounded through the house, and Rosemary was consumed with hot indignation.

Why had she come? What did that bold January girl want of her now?—for Rosemary never doubted but that she was after her. She was always trying to make up to her at school, and now she must have de-

cided to carry the persecution further. She must have determined to invade her home—her castle. Rosemary recollected the day when the January girl had patronizingly offered to help her with her algebra, and had invited her to go home with her after school. Quite likely she was come now upon such an errand, and meant to proffer her undesired services through her mother.

Rosemary's heart sank as it occurred to her that possibly her mother was in collusion with her. Perhaps she and her father had planned this device of bringing her into contact with a person who repelled her as no one else had ever done! In such case, what was she to do? What could she do?

She clasped her hands, and strove to keep back, not her indignation, but her tears. For she was grieved rather than angry. She could never again feel any anger in connection with her step-father, nor even the mildest indignation. And if he had aught to do with the January girl's coming, there was nothing for Rosemary to do but to submit to his will. She would never, could never defy him. Where she felt that he was deceived and mistook, she might go counter to what he supposed to be his wishes, so long as she could do it quietly and without disturbance. But she would not deliberately challenge his will.

But suppose the January girl had simply come of her own accord? It was like her, of course. In that event? Rosemary felt that she had only a few seconds to decide upon her course of action. Momen-

tarily, she expected to hear her mother call or to see Sally at the door as a messenger. She hadn't a headache. She seemed to feel as usual; and in any event she had never refused to see anyone who came to the house, and she supposed she couldn't do so now. At the same time, she would not——

The front door slammed. Rosemary's heart beat more warmly. Ah! her mother understood. She had sent the January girl away,—kindly, of course; she couldn't have been otherwise. She had probably said that she was sorry, but Rosemary——

What was that! The January girl was, indeed, going down the walk, but she was not alone. Mrs. Anstruther was with her! Rosemary's mother was with her! She was going to the gate—she was going through it. She was going “a piece” with the January girl. She was going yet further, for now she was out of sight. Rosemary could see a long way up the avenue, and her mother and that girl had disappeared together. Her mother knew she was in the house, but she hadn't taken the trouble to explain to her. Perhaps, indeed, she had taken trouble not to let her know her purpose. Perhaps it had something to do with Rosemary herself?

Rosemary would have been shocked and incredible had anyone intimated that she was of jealous nature. She did not dream that her first instinctive feeling against the January girl would not have intensified into antipathy had not her step-father championed the stranger so warmly, had he not seemed to like her

better than Rosemary. Neither did she understand that unconsciously she resented the action of any member of the family in widening the circle of his or her affections. She herself cared for few persons, and cared for them intensely and almost painfully. And unconsciously she demanded a similar confinement of their friendly relations.

More than half an hour passed. To Rosemary, in her wretchedness, it seemed hours. Then she saw her mother returning alone. Against her will, she went down stairs to meet her.

"O Rosemary!" her mother cried the moment she saw her, "Jack is lost—Jack and that little Enid January!"

Rosemary's eyes widened. She gazed blankly at her mother.

Mrs. Anstruther dropped into a chair, but sat bolt upright as if she was only pausing.

"Janice came here a little while ago—she's a dear girl, Rosemary. It seems that Enid's teacher telephoned right after school to ask if Enid was ill. She's such a fragile-looking little creature that when she didn't come back for the afternoon session, Miss Barrows was worried about her. And when Janice got back from the academy, she found the little girl's nurse in hysterics. She started out to find Jack and question him, and what do you think! Jack hadn't been to his school, either! So she came down here, and I took her right over to the academy to consult father."

Rosemary had grown pale. The while her mother had spoken, visions had come to her of Jack's reckless pranks during the early part of the preceding summer in his father's absence. What might not have happened? And to think that it should have been the January girl's little sister! Rosemary was truly alarmed, but she couldn't help feeling that if anything had happened, the January girl might think that she was to blame for it,—and possibly, too, her step-father.

"Tell me about it, mother! Have—do you know where they are?" she asked anxiously.

"Not so far," Mrs. Anstruther returned, trying to speak cheerfully. "But I feel so relieved since I saw daddy. He started right off, and I shall expect to hear from him at any minute. Mr. January is in New York, but daddy told Janice not to telegraph yet. She went home to comfort the little girl's nurse. I walked to the gate with her. She will telephone around and then she will start out. I am going up through the street myself, now, and inquire along the way."

Rosemary started towards the clothespress. "I'll go with you," she said.

"No, Rosemary," her mother said hesitatingly, "someone must stay here, for messages or anything, and——"

"Isn't Sally here?" demanded the girl.

"Sally's going with me,—she has gone on ahead now," her mother said hurriedly, as she rose. "Daddy

said I had better take her ; she understands Jack's ways better than any of us."

"And he said I was to stay here?"

"Yes, dear. Don't let little Em'ly get frightened. But if you hear anything, send her straight towards the common for us."

Pained by the discrimination, Rosemary didn't feel that it was unjust, however, and acquiesced quietly. She followed her mother to the door.

"Which way did daddy go?" she asked.

Her mother grew very white. She could scarcely answer.

"He went out to—Larcom's Pond," she faltered and hurried on to overtake Sally.

CHAPTER XI

IT was truly only by good fortune that the runaway children hadn't gone to Larcom's Pond that afternoon. Jack had indeed proposed to go thither and take Enid out in an old boat that had been left there by a camping party; but the timid little girl had shrunk from the adventure, and he had substituted another diversion.

The boy acted in good faith. Though a well-disposed lad, Jack was happy-go-lucky and heedless, and one never knew what to expect of him. But since he had become acquainted with Enid January, and had spent all his leisure in her companionship, he had been a model of good behavior. Even at school, his deportment was excellent, in that being kept in after the others were dismissed meant separation from the timid, quiet, colorless little girl who was perfection in his eyes.

Enid was always quiet, and perhaps only another child and one as devoted as Jack Greenaway would have noticed that she had been quieter than ever since her sister's party. The boy hadn't fixed any date, but he had felt that something was troubling Enid, and had striven for some time to make her forget it. It was only that morning that he had finally learned that

the little girl was grieving and brooding over the circumstance that Jan had had only six people at a party to which twenty had been bidden.

The fact that Rosemary hadn't been one of the six made Jack's deep sympathy partake of the nature of remorse. And now he was as anxious to make amends as he was to comfort Enid. But troubled as he was, Jack was beset by none of the doubts that might have vexed an older person. He learned of Enid's distress on the way to school in the morning. Before he left her at the door of her school, he had decided that the little girl must have some special treat to drive her sadness away, and parted from her in the cheerful assurance that some suggestion would come to him.

It came promptly, and on their way back to school in the afternoon, he asked her to go to Larcom's Woods after school for a boat ride.

Enid's fear of "drowning" didn't trouble him, for Enid was afraid of everything and everybody. He stifled his personal disappointment, accepted the situation cheerfully, and endeavored to hit upon a substitute to propose so that Enid would have it to think of during the afternoon. And suddenly one came to him.

"We might go over to Longfield on the train and—well, just have a good time, Enid," he proposed, "sort of fool round all the afternoon, you know. Do you think you'd like that?"

"Yes, Jack," she replied promptly. "Shall we ask teacher?"

"No, Enid, we'll have to run to catch the train," he

said firmly, and taking her hand turned about and started for the station. "She'll think you don't feel well," he went on encouragingly, "and that's true. And neither don't I myself. I am so sorry about Jan's party and all that ice cream melting up and angel cake and all that and—*people* not going, that I couldn't study this afternoon the least mite—not even if my father was after me—hardly, I mean. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go over to Longfield and get cheered up, and then we can make Jan feel happy too. The rest o' the week we'll give ourselves up to that. She's a good deal easier to—well, to do anything with than Rosemary is."

Jack had money with him; his pocket was full of nickels and coppers. Heretofore, he had always squandered his allowance on the day his father gave it to him, but since Enid's coming, he had begun to save a good part of it. He liked to jingle it as he walked along beside her, and he liked to feel he had it in case she wished for anything. But Libby didn't allow her to eat any candy except what she made for her, and there wasn't much else to spend money upon in Greenwich Town. Wherefore, he wasn't held back to-day by any pecuniary difficulty.

He purchased two full tickets, though the agent told him half-fare would be sufficient. Enid shrank back in terror when the engine pulled in, but he took her hand and led her aboard the train so gently that once they were seated she was as unconcerned and as happy as he.

She had lived in the city all her life and was not so impressed by Longfield as Jack, but she had never been out on the street except in company with an older person, so the adventure was as exciting to her. They rambled about hand in hand for some time, looking into shop windows. Jack had never before had a chance to linger as long as he wished—which was inordinately long—at this delightful occupation, and Enid was spellbound by his eloquence. After going the rounds they entered one shop and another, purchasing peanuts and frosted gingerbread elephants, a doll's sunshade and a pocket cork-screw.

While he was selecting the latter, Enid sat down on a stool, and Jack realized that she was tired. Whereupon he proposed a ride in the trolley car.

They waited until one stopped before the door of the shop to take someone on, and clambered in. They rode in silence for some time, their eyes fixed on the window. Suddenly quiet little Enid cried out in delight:

"O Jack! Look quick! The darling little play-house!" she cried.

Jack's quick glance took it in in a flash, a charming, tiny cottage, complete even to shutters and clapboards, which stood at a little distance from a large, comfortable-looking dwelling house standing well back from the street. He saw, too, that the shutters were closed and that there were no footsteps in the patch of snow that lingered before the tiny veranda and the front door.

When they could no longer see it, the children looked into one another's eyes with speechless delight.

"It's big enough for a real house, Enid," Jack said finally. "Father could almost stand up in it without bending over, and middle-sized people could live there easy."

"O, yes, Jack," she echoed. "It's the nicest house I ever saw."

Jack proposed that the next time the car stopped they should get out and look at it. And presently they alighted and made their way back through the sticky mud that coated the sidewalk.

For some minutes they gazed at it in silence. Enid drew a deep sigh.

"A little up-stairs and all!" she murmured.

"And a real chimley," added Jack. "And we could have a hammock on the piazza in summer, and look, Enid, a swing in that tree."

Enid turned her gaze upon him.

"But Jack, there's Libby and Jan and daddy," she said wistfully; "they couldn't all get in, and I couldn't leave them."

"Of course you couldn't, now, Enid," he declared. "But you'd feel different when the right time came, you know. Everybody leaves their fathers and mothers when they get married and don't mind at all. There's your father. Your Aunt Marg'ret is his sister, ain't she? And your grandmother's his mother. He don't seem to feel lonesome with none of them round, does he?"

Enid shook her head. Her eyes grew round with wonder.

"Of course it will be some little time yet," Jack remarked largely. "And even then, this is so near you could go over to Greenwich Town every day if you wanted to. And—Gee! It ain't being used at all. I wonder if they'd sell it?"

He jingled the money left in his pocket, and the sound gave him courage.

"No harm in asking 'em, is there?" he asked. And Enid declared that there was none.

Together they went up the steps of the big house. Jack rang the bell.

The maid who came to the door started back as she saw the children, the bright-looking boy with the piquant, freckled face and honest eyes and the delicate, unusual-looking little girl.

"Is the lady of the house in?" Jack inquired politely. Then she looked so odd, that he added quickly: "We ain't pedlers nor anything. We haven't anything to sell, you know."

"Yes, sir, she's in," she said kindly and ushered the pair into a large, handsome room off a great, shining hall. A lady came in directly and so smilingly that Jack thought she believed she knew them and would be disappointed.

Rising quickly he bowed low, and Enid made a courtesy.

"I am very glad to see you," the lady said. "Pray sit down. I wonder if I ought to recognize you?"

"No, ma'am, we are just—travelers passing through Longfield," Jack replied grandly. "I am Jack Anstruther and this is Miss Enid January."

Anstruther seemed at the moment a more impressive name than Greenaway, until it came to him she might think it was merely *Anster*.

"It's spelled A-n-s-t-r-u-t-h-e-r," he added.

"It's a good old name, as well as a distinguished one spelled in that way," she said. "I am familiar with that, but January is a new name to me in this part of the country."

She gazed at the little girl. Enid's hair, which floated over her shoulders, light as thistledown, was almost as silvery in tone. Her brows and lashes were of the palest gold, and her blue eyes might have recalled the blue of icebergs. Her white skin, transparently revealing the blue veins at the temple, was just touched in the cheeks with faint pink.

"January is certainly a fitting name for the little lady," Mrs. Crane declared. "However, if you hadn't told me, Master Anstruther, who do you suppose I should have taken her to be? The Snow Maiden! Do you know the tale by Hawthorne?"

The children did not know it.

"Well, she was a little snow image two children made, and she became their beloved little snow sister. If you are Professor Anstruther's son, as I think you must be, you must ask your father to read it to you."

"Yes'm," returned Jack politely, but she saw that his thoughts were elsewhere.

Rather at a loss as to how to proceed, she asked them to remove their wraps.

"I guess we haven't got time," Jack said, and his face sobered as his eyes fell upon his corduroy trousers.

"We came away in a hurry," he confessed. "I always wear my best suit, you know, when I come to Longfield, only I didn't know in time to-day. I was all right for—anything like going boat-riding. But Enid's always dressed up. Would you like to take off your coat, Enid?"

The little girl shook her head shyly.

"What we came for—I don't mean we came to Longfield for it, but what we just stepped in to ask you about—was if the little house in the garden is for sale. Is it?" Jack inquired.

"The play-house?" the lady asked, smilingly.

It occurred to Jack that she would be rather nicer if she didn't smile all the while.

"Yes'm, only it's big enough for real people if they're not too thundering tall," he remarked with dignity. "My father is tall enough to reach about to the chimley, but lots of people—married people, I mean—could live there. I just thought—I'd like to know what you'd take for it. You——"

Now the lady's expression confused him, almost offended him, in fact, and Jack decided that he would be more guarded.

"I know some people that are going to be married that might like to buy it if it didn't cost too much,"

he said. "They've got money in the bank, you know, —quite a lot."

"We hadn't thought of selling it," she said, and now she, too, was serious. "The proposal is so unexpected that I hardly know what to say. I should have to consult Mr. Crane, my husband."

"O there's plenty of time," Jack assured her, mollified. "The fact is they ain't going to be married right away—not for several years. They're—rather young still. But once my mother saw a hat she thought was just magnificent in a shop window, but she waited to tell father, and then it was gone and he said never do that again. 'If you see anything you like, Emily,' says he, 'you snap it up quick every time.' Well, that's how I—how these people would feel about this house."

"I see. Well, I'll tell you what I can do. I will agree now not to sell it to anyone else. And when this lady and gentleman are ready to marry, if they still feel they would like it, I feel pretty sure Mr. Crane and I will let them have it."

The children exchanged shy glances of delight.

"I suppose it may be—eight or ten years before they would wish it?" Mrs. Crane ventured.

"O no, ma'am," said Jack quickly, and made hasty calculation. "Nearer four, I should say," he remarked judiciously.

At that moment, a gentleman entered whom Mrs. Crane introduced to the children as her husband. To him she explained briefly and with all seriousness that

her guests had called on business—a matter of real estate. And then they both insisted that they should take off their coats and have dinner with them.

As he spoke, Mr. Crane turned on the lights, and Jack started. He had forgotten everything. It was dark already, and he had made no plans for getting home. He didn't even know where they were. But he tried to speak coolly lest Enid be frightened.

"I guess we'd better be going right off," he said. "I guess our famblies will be expecting us home to supper. My mother may be mad now because I ain't there before dark. It won't take long, only—I don't feel sure of the way—from here."

Mr. Crane came to their assistance. He agreed to see that they got home directly after dinner, and proposed to telephone their families while Mrs. Crane took them upstairs to get ready for dinner.

When they came down, Enid like a little fairy with her silvery hair floating over her dainty smocked frock, Jack's face pink from friction, Mr. Crane had spoken with the little girl's sister, and had also received a second message from Greenwich Town. Mr. Anstruther was starting as he spoke to drive over, and would call for them in about half an hour now.

Innocent little Enid, who was very fond of Mr. Anstruther, was filled with delight. But Jack's freckles stood out darkly against his white face. Oppressed by a sudden sense of guilt, he was manifestly ill at ease all through dinner.

Enid was sleeping sweetly in Mr. Anstruther's arms before they were out of Longfield. They drove on for more than half the distance home in silence. Then Jack found his voice.

"I guess you're pretty mad with me, father?" he ventured meekly.

Anstruther considered a few moments.

"No, Jack, I don't think I am," he said. "I was frightened, and your mother and Janice and Libby were more than frightened. And now I am disappointed, sadly disappointed to feel that I cannot trust my son. If anything had happened to little Enid, try to think how your mother and I would have felt. I don't believe I could ever have looked Mr. January in the face again. And something might so easily have happened."

He sighed deeply at the thought, and spoke rather sharply.

"What in the world possessed you, anyhow, Jack? Was it simply that you took it into your head to play hookey and persuaded good, innocent little Enid to go along with you?"

"O no, father, there was more to it 'n that," the boy asseverated. "Enid wa'n't to blame, so far as that goes, not one mite. I asked her to go and she went. She never thought of its not being all right, and I made her feel easy about staying out of school one afternoon. I was to blame, only I never thought of there being anything out of the way neither until it was dark all of a sudden. I didn't think of its being

right or wrong, or *anything*, you know, father; I only thought it would be nice to take Enid over to Longfield and give her a good time."

"But, Jack, how could you possibly do all that without thinking? You are supposed to ask permission even to go anywhere after school. I can't understand how you could take the train, to say nothing of dragging Enid along, without thinking of what you were doing."

"It does seem queer, but I was thinking so hard about her, it put everything else right out of my mind," Jack owned. "You see, father, Enid's been feeling just turrble ever since Jan's party and worse every day, because twenty people were invited and only six came, and it wasn't snowing or raining either. I wanted to sort of get it off her mind, and—I would of wanted to anyway, but I felt as if I just *had* to, because——"

"Yes, Jack," his father said very kindly, "because?"

"Because my sister was one that didn't go," said Jack softly.

Afterwards, when he reflected upon the matter, and realized that here was another case of trouble in the family for which Rosemary was really responsible, Anstruther felt inclined to tell her about it. But he was not minded to be the one to bring up the matter of Janice's party. That, he believed, was Rosemary's part. So he explained to his wife, hoping she would speak of it to Rosemary.

But Mrs. Anstruther hadn't the heart to hurt Rosemary as she feared that would hurt her, and carefully guarded against her knowing anything about it. And Rosemary, who did not consider two weeks' separation from Enid sufficient punishment for Jack's deliberate wrong-doing, could not but feel that her stepfather was over-indulgent towards the faults of everyone except her unfortunate self.

But there was no indignation in the conclusion, only sorrow that she could not win what she strove so painfully to attain. And she was determined to keep on struggling, bootless as such action might be.

CHAPTER XII

A CELEBRATED orchestra gave a course of three performances at Longfield that spring for which Anstruther had purchased three tickets. Rosemary knew that she was to have gone with her father and mother, and looked forward eagerly to the pleasure; but the day of the first concert arrived, and nothing had been said. Somehow, she hadn't felt like speaking to her mother about it, but she hastened home from school that afternoon expecting that her mother would have laid out another frock on her bed and would tell her to change before supper. Her heart grew lighter as she thought of it. Music was so wonderful for bringing about sweet and kindly moods. Perhaps on the way home she could explain to her father that it wasn't her fault—that she couldn't care for the January girl, couldn't even endure her as she could other people—because that was the way she was made. And once daddy understood that, all would be right.

But Mrs. Anstruther didn't mention the concert, and at table it was Sally who appeared in her best gown. It was she, also, who accompanied her parents to Longfield for that and the two following concerts.

The loss of the music, though a real loss, was the least of Rosemary's disappointment. Sally would en-

joy it nearly as much, and Sally was a dear child who had been loyal to her step-father from the beginning. Furthermore, Sally would gladly have yielded to her older sister had the choice been hers. But it hurt the girl's pride to be punished thus like a child. She would be sixteen in the autumn, and up to the advent of the January girl, had been treated by her father very much like a friend. A great many other people in town were attending the concerts, and everyone would be discussing the Anstruthers' taking Sally and leaving her at home.

Nevertheless, she bore the disappointment with apparent cheerfulness, tried to reassure Sally and to take a sisterly interest in her pleasure, and hoped that, having taken the bitter medicine without even making a face, pleasant relations might be restored. But her step-father's demeanor remained unchanged,—kindly, gentle as ever, but slightly cool. Half unconsciously and vaguely, she had expected him to appeal to her. But finally she realized that any initiation must come from herself.

The evening following the last concert, as he dropped one paper to take up another, Rosemary accosted him rather timidly.

"Daddy, I want to say something to you," she faltered.

"Yes, dear," he returned with a certain restrained eagerness, the coolness quite gone. But it was so evident that he expected her rather than to justify herself to make an apology concerning that January girl that

Rosemary flinched. And though she had rehearsed what she was to say over and again, she felt suddenly all at sea.

"Daddy," she said desperately, "you don't think—do you believe—— One can't possibly like everyone in the world, can one?"

"I don't suppose everyone can," he admitted, "but as a matter of fact the circles of most of our worlds are rather limited."

"Well, if you don't like someone, and simply can't, isn't it wrong to pretend to?" she asked wistfully.

"It's always wrong to pretend, but, after all, few of us come in contact with many persons who might seem to require such pretending," Anstruther observed. "Unless we're reasonably sure we're up against a monster, it's always well to search our own hearts and see if the fault isn't there."

He knew, of course, what the girl was driving at, and had spoken with all kindness up to this point. But Rosemary drew a deep sigh, as who should say, "What's the use?" and looking sharply, he seemed to see that stubborn complacency that always irritated him.

"I can't help feeling, Rosemary, that it's rather an absurd question coming from a girl not yet sixteen," he said crossly. "It sounds—O finicky and missish and all that. There's no reason in the world, you know, why you shouldn't be able to put up with anyone you're ever likely to encounter in Greenwich Town with perfect composure."

Rosemary flushed.

"I didn't mean thieves and robbers and—*murderers*," she retorted with unusual warmth, looking so beautiful and appealing with her heightened color, her excitement, and the wistful, hurt droop of her lips, that her mother's heart would have ached for her. "But—you might find people even here that you could never like if you tried all your life."

"Such as?" he demanded.

Rosemary lost all her color.

"Disagreeable people—people that are—*vulgar*!" she cried desperately.

At the ugly word, he, too, lost his color.

"Vulgar!" he almost thundered. "What do you mean, Rosemary Greenaway! Who would you call vulgar? Tell me that!"

Rosemary couldn't speak.

"Rosemary, I insist upon your telling me who there is in this town that you would call vulgar," he said hotly.

"Nobody," she returned rather pitifully; but he felt more incensed than if she had had courage to name the January girl.

"Well, you had better not," he said with harshness quite unlike him. "Let me tell you once for all, Rosemary, that that is a dangerous word to use. Ten to one the person who uses it is a snob or a cad, and I'd ten thousand times sooner be vulgar than either of those!"

He grasped his paper as fiercely as if it were some-

how to blame, and began to read frowningly. Rosemary said to herself that he must hate her absolutely to be thus implacable. She stole away quietly and almost fearfully, half expecting to be summoned fiercely back and ordered to make a companion of the January girl.

When Mrs. Anstruther went to her husband's study late that evening, she found him looking worn and tired. After upwards of six months of the happiest family life she had ever known, things seemed to be slipping back towards confusion again. And again Rosemary was the storm center.

"What's gone wrong with Rosemary, Thad?" she asked anxiously as she seated herself beside the big lamp.

"I blew her up," he said with a comically rueful look upon his homely face. "I lost my patience completely, and I shouldn't wonder if I *was* rather hard on her. But somehow, she seems to try me beyond endurance. She's so stubborn and sort of self-righteous. Honestly, Emily, though she looks like a poem, that girl is almost *smug*."

"She's been crying as if her heart were clean broken," her mother said.

"Poor little thing!" he cried, all compunction. "Dear me, Emily, I wish you hadn't told me! I see myself becoming the typical step-father. But she *is* wrong-headed, you'll admit that?"

"She's so painfully serious, Thad. She never sees the amusing side of anything, so that little things

that other girls wouldn't notice at all or only laugh at, hurt her cruelly."

"In other words, she has no sense of humor?" he said thoughtfully. "I shouldn't wonder, Emily, if that were at the root of all the difficulty. Poor old Roger hadn't a glimmer."

"I don't think Rosemary lacks it utterly," her mother returned. "She can see the humor of many things when it's pointed out to her. I can't help feeling, Thad, that if you would help her to see the amusing side of things, you'd find it easier. You're terribly direct with her, and she thinks so much of you that your severity nearly kills her."

"If she thinks so much of me, she certainly takes a curious way of showing it," he remarked.

The next day he was all kindness to Rosemary. And when a week had passed and he remained the same, Rosemary believed that the old friendly relation that had existed from mid-summer to the day of the wretched party had been permanently restored. Somehow, he must have come to understand her position, she decided; and though she felt no triumph, her happiness was such that again she became a radiant presence in the household. But only briefly; then suddenly everything was worse than ever.

CHAPTER XIII

AS the school-master left the academy the last day of that week, and saw that he was about to meet Mrs. Clement, he made up his mind to stop and speak to her. He was very fond of her husband, who was a boyhood friend of his, but he had never taken to Mrs. Clement. Now, however, he reminded himself grimly that 'there wasn't anyone a man was likely to encounter in Greenwich Town whom he couldn't comfortably tolerate if he wished to do so.

He had discovered that the cloud he had noticed between Ned Mitchell and Charley Clement, who had been chums from the days of their first knickerbockers, had not lifted. He had sounded both boys, but hadn't been able to gather anything definite from either. And Charley began to look thin and pale as well as very sober.

He spoke of the latter fact as he walked along with the boy's mother; and she said that Charley was not well, and acknowledged that the coolness between himself and Ned had something to do with it.

"O Mr. Anstruther, I'm so worried that I don't know what to do!" she cried. "Do you know, I can't help fearing that Charley'll go into a decline the way girls sometimes do. He's as sensitive as a girl, you know,—far more so than Jane, indeed."

"I wish there were something I could do, Mrs. Clement," he said earnestly.

"O Mr. Anstruther, if you would only come into the house and talk it over with me," she urged.

He was very ready to comply. As soon as they were seated in the stiff parlor, Mrs. Clement began nervously. She was apprehensive lest some of the family come in before she should have a chance to disburden her mind.

"Charles wouldn't approve, and Jane and Charley—I'm sure I don't know what those children would think," she said.

"When did the trouble between the boys begin?" he inquired.

"At the time of the January girl's party," she returned, and he had to stifle what would have been a groan. He was heartily sick of the thought of that party. "Charley liked Jan from the very first, you know, and would have gone to the party, but Ned told him the very last thing that *he* didn't mean to go. And then Ned went."

"I believe Ned changed his mind, Mrs. Clement."

"Well, he might have called for Charley," she said sharply, and went on; "and then, when it got round next day that you were there, and that you—well, that you had your opinion of those that didn't go,—Charley was all broken up about it. He had nothing to say—I got all I know from Jane and Joe Pitcher. But I have felt as if more was troubling him than the trouble with Ned. Perhaps I ought not to tell you, but the

other night I got up and went to his door after midnight. Charley was crying—sobbing. I went in and finally he told me that you said that the boys who had stayed away from the January girl's party were cads. And he said he could never outgrow it,—that every time you looked at him he felt as if you were calling him one."

The schoolmaster was very pale.

"O Mrs. Clement, I am very sorry to have given that impression. I'll have a talk with Charley and try to make things right between him and Ned. I felt it was a wrong and cruel thing to do for those boys and girls to organize a sort of boycott against an innocent stranger, but——"

"If I tell you who was really at the bottom of it all, will you promise not to be hard on her, Mr. Anstruther?" she proposed.

"I'll try not to be, Mrs. Clement," he said quietly, but with sinking heart.

"Charles would be scandalized and so would the children, but it's only fair to the others," she insisted. "If Rosemary hadn't said *she* wouldn't go to the party, no one would have dreamed of staying away. Those that went had to risk her contempt, for she wouldn't go because she thought the January girl was vulgar. And Rosemary's word is law."

The schoolmaster was staring into the crown of his soft hat.

"I hope I haven't done wrong in telling you," she said.

"Not at all, Mrs. Clement; you did quite right," he declared.

"Rosemary's a beautiful girl," she said eagerly. "Everyone loves her. And she's so sweet and refined and—*poetic* that one can understand how the January girl might have rather grated on her, she's so sort of free and easy and hail-fellow-well-met. And yet, when she comes really to know Jan, she'll like her, too. We're very fond of her here,—even Jane, for all that she swears by Rosemary."

Anstruther remained in his study that evening until after the younger children were in bed. Then he joined his wife and Rosemary in the living-room. He took a seat near Rosemary.

"Rosemary," he said quietly, "I didn't mean ever to speak to you about Janice January's party, believing it to be your place to speak first to me. But now I must ask you one question. I had supposed up to to-day that the major part of the class stayed away because of concerted action due to general disinclination, but I have gathered that one person was really responsible for the whole outrageous performance. I understand that one person conceived a dislike for the stranger, openly pronounced her vulgar, and exerted her not inconsiderable influence against her from the first; and that when she declared that she wouldn't attend the party, she knew that that would practically mean the defection of the whole class. Am I wrong or right, in thus stating it?"

Though her action hadn't been thus deliberate nor intentional, his words carried conviction to the dismayed girl.

"Right, daddy," she admitted.

"Very well, then who is the person?" he demanded hotly.

"It was me," said Rosemary. "I mean, *I*."

"And you have known all this time that I have blamed the others equally with you?" he asked sternly.

"I—I don't really know, daddy," she said. "I suppose I must have, though."

"I'm sure, I don't know which is worse," he said with cutting deliberation, "to do an abominable thing like that, or to maintain a cowardly silence about it afterwards!"

"O Thad!" protested his wife gently.

Rosemary looked up desperately.

"I guess you're glad that I'm not really your daughter, and that you're only my step-father," she said in a hollow-sounding voice.

In spite of all his pain and indignation, he couldn't help smiling.

"I am certainly more than thankful, Rosemary," he assured her emphatically.

"O Thad, if you talk like that you'll make *me* cry," said Mrs. Anstruther. "Rosemary, come to me. Mother's sorry for her little girl, and knows that however many mistakes she may make, she longs to do right and wants to be good always."

CHAPTER XIV

THE January family, including Libby and little Enid, who went to sleep in Libby's arms on each occasion, attended the series of concerts at Longfield that spring. Jan, whose eye always roved over any assembly where she might be in search of Rosemary, was surprised, when she discovered the Anstruthers in the audience, not to see Rosemary with them. She felt assured that Rosemary would care deeply for music. But perhaps she was too sensitive to endure the heavier parts of an orchestral concert?

"I didn't see you at the concert last night, Miss Greenaway," she made bold to remark next morning at recess. "Don't you——"

"I didn't go. I don't expect to go to any of them," Rosemary rejoined frigidly.

"O," murmured Jan weakly, "don't you——"

She couldn't go on. She couldn't face Rosemary's eyes, which expressed indignation and defiance and scorn. There was hurt in them, too, which Jan felt rather than saw, and which she did not understand.

"It was good,—that is, it seemed good to me," she said rather lamely, and, turning, went on her way out of doors, with hurt in her own heart, and started a game of ball.

It was the day after the last concert that she remarked upon Rosemary's absence to Ned Mitchell and Charley Clement. At this time, Jan was on friendly terms with all her class, with the one exception; but among the girls, none meant more to her than another. She shared the common sports, but she never paired off with any one girl. Jane Clement was her neighbor, but there was little in Jane to appeal to an original nature like Jan's. She liked Jane's baby sister, however, as she secretly denominated Charley, and enjoyed bantering and chaffing him. And she liked Ned Mitchell cordially.

During the period of the coolness between the boys, Jan had become better acquainted with both, and after the schoolmaster had brought them together again, they fell into the habit of dropping into the hospitable January house together frequently. The night after the third concert, the three were discussing it.

"It seems queer that Rosemary Greenaway didn't go to any of them," Jan remarked, as they came to an end of a tally they had made up together of the Greenwich Town folk who had attended. "You would think she would be just the one to be wild about music of that superior sort, wouldn't you? Do you suppose she feels it too deeply?"

"It might be that, but I hardly think it," Ned said slowly. "I shouldn't wonder if Mr. Anstruther didn't ask her."

"Didn't ask her! Well, wouldn't that rattle your slats!" exclaimed the old, inelegant January girl. "I

can't imagine waiting to be invited by my own father. But it may be different with a step-father."

"All real fathers aren't such easy marks as yours, Jan," Charley remarked in his squeaky voice. And as they all laughed, January opened his eyes and smiled sleepily.

"Nothing doing, old top," murmured his daughter cheerfully, and he resumed his nap.

"Jo Pitcher's father let him go, and he's supposed to be rather a tight wad, and Jo doesn't know one piece from another," Jan persisted.

"Perhaps Mr. Anstruther thought it was Sally's turn," remarked Charley, who couldn't bear to have his hero blamed by implication.

"My goodness! Couldn't he have taken both of them?" asked Jan. "It wasn't as if they had had to drive, but with a special train both ways——"

"He might have asked her, and Rosemary wouldn't go," Ned suggested quietly. "You never can tell what Rosemary will do or what she won't. I suppose you must have heard, Jan, that she didn't like it at all when Mr. Anstruther married her mother; and she wouldn't have anything to do with him for ever so long after. But since she got to liking him, she has more than made up for lost time; but I guess she worries a lot over the way she treated him then. It would be exactly like her to punish herself by not going to the concerts and things like that."

"She told Jane some time before that she expected to go," said Charley with evident reluctance. "Jane

didn't ask her afterwards why she didn't, because Rosemary seemed to keep out of everybody's way afterwards, as if she didn't want anyone to say anything to her. I guess there's sort of trouble between her and Mr. Anstruther. He must have got down on her at the same time——"

Charley stopped short, coloring to the roots of his fair hair. Jan spoke quickly.

"O boys, did you notice what an appropriate name the cornet had?" she exclaimed. "*Ballou*—how's that?"

They had spoken before of an odd little fantasy the orchestra had given as an encore in which the part of the piccolo had delighted them all. Now, Jan called Libby in to play it over, and Libby seated herself at the piano and rattled it off with a spirit that filled them with delighted amazement. They parted in good spirits, but the January girl carried a heavy heart to her rather startlingly elegant bed-chamber.

For she had understood Charley's unfinished allusion only too well. Mr. Anstruther was down on Rosemary because of her—because she hadn't come to her party! Being the daughter of the school-master, he had probably thought she ought to have been more cordial to a stranger. And Rosemary was still further down on her because of it all. Mr. Anstruther hadn't asked her to go to the concerts, and she had blamed Jan for the loss of the treat. That explained the way she had snubbed her the day she had mentioned the first concert to Rosemary. She had never been so cold and

distant before—had never seemed so to hate her.

But what wonder! And how could Mr. Anstruther have criticized beautiful Rosemary? For she wasn't, after all, of the cordial, hospitable sort. And even as she felt his kindly feeling for her in his action, Jan groaned as she thought of it. Things had been bad enough in any case, but why should she have come between Rosemary and one of the very few persons for whom she cared? It seemed as if she couldn't bear it.

For a week, the burden of all this weighed heavily upon the January girl. At one moment, she said to herself that she would keep away from Rosemary for ever. She would not for all the world be the cause of trouble between her and Mr. Anstruther. She would herself be so distant that he would think she didn't take to Rosemary at all, and wouldn't have had her at her party, and then he would cease to blame her. Again, Jan would contemplate going to Mr. Anstruther to say that really she didn't mind that Rosemary hadn't come to the party, and beg him not to lay it up against her. And yet again, Jan would wonder whether she could not explain or appeal to Rosemary herself.

But Jan knew herself too well to delude herself. She couldn't act as if she wasn't drawn to Rosemary,—didn't want to be friends with a girl she loved already. Neither could she go to Mr. Anstruther on any such errand. Jan's sense of propriety was undeveloped; but she stood too much in awe of her school-master to appeal to him in a manner that would be virtual criti-

cism of his relations with his daughter. Neither could she tell him an untruth. As for appealing to Rosemary—Jan tried more than once or twice to do that, but only to be snubbed frigidly.

Finally the spring had come and gone, summer was abroad and the end of the school year was at hand. And still the situation was unchanged. The January girl had lived in Greenwich Town nearly six months, and had won her place in the academy and among her schoolmates. But she was no more to Rosemary Greenaway than she had been on the first day she had entered the door of the academy. Indeed, she was less. She was a stranger now as then,—only, at that time she had been an unknown stranger, and to-day——

But Jan couldn't bear to acknowledge that Rosemary hated her. As soon as school closed, she and Enid and Libby were going West to spend the summer with her grandmother and aunt. She was sorry to leave her new friends, and more than sorry to leave Rosemary. She liked to see her every day, to gaze on her beautiful face, and to know that she was near. At the same time, she hoped that the long summer would work miracles. It wasn't impossible that Rosemary should relent somewhat, and she might herself so change that upon coming back in the autumn she might strike the fastidious girl rather more favorably. Suppose that at that time she should have become yet a third sort of stranger—one whom Rosemary might really want to know!

CHAPTER XV

THE beginning of the summer holidays found Rosemary Greenaway almost ill. Towards the end of the school year she had drooped perceptibly to everyone except her step-father, who had been very busy with the graduating class and with correspondence concerning the courses he was again to give at the summer school at Filmore, the college where he had formerly taught. When he suddenly realized how badly the girl looked, he was shocked and distressed.

He felt considerable compunction, too. Rosemary had been through a great deal since her father's death, —quite too much for her years and her sensitive make-up—and during the year just past, he felt she should have been shielded and perhaps humored. Anstruther wasn't sure that he hadn't rather exceeded his right as a step-father. Had she been his own daughter, the situation would have been different. But he had known her only when she was already a half-grown girl, intense, sensitive, spoiled, and with certain unfortunate peculiarities inherited from her father. No doubt he should have gone more slowly.

Sighing wearily, he said to himself that he would give over all effort to induce Rosemary to be kind or just or even decent to the January girl. She thought

she couldn't, and there should be an end of it. He wouldn't do anything further to endanger her health if she should turn against the whole academy, and pronounce all her schoolmates unfit to be her associates.

During the days that elapsed between his discovery and the time he went West to take up his duties in the summer school, he was all kindness to the girl; and Rosemary, who was truly almost exhausted by the strain she had undergone, had a real breathing space. Half an invalid during the early part of the summer, occupying a couch in the cool living-room or on the veranda, she was the center of a very devoted household. Everyone petted and pitied her, and there was considerable rivalry as to who should do most for her.

Rosemary thrived apace under all this, and before her step-father went away had regained considerable strength. She was so sweet and gracious and responsive that her mother, looking back over the recent past, could not understand how there could have been any difficulty with the girl. She spoke of this to her husband.

He was leaving home next day for upwards of six weeks. Otherwise, he might have reminded her that there need never be any difficulty with Rosemary so long as the girl had her will. But as it was, he smiled and said nothing.

His leave-taking this year was very different from last year, when Rosemary had stolen away from home just before his departure to avoid saying good-by.

She wasn't strong enough to go to the station with the rest of the family; but the parting between her step-father and herself was so friendly and heartening that the girl almost forgot the painful fact that she shouldn't see him again until the end of the summer. But when he had bidden Waggles take care of her until the others should return, and had rushed out to overtake and join them, Rosemary found herself in tears.

Choking them back, she went out into the dining-room whence she could watch them far down the avenue. But she shrank painfully back from the window as she saw that there were six of them—as many as if she had been with them. Jack had dragged that Enid January along! It seemed to Rosemary as if she could never escape those awful Januarys! Constantly, her best moods, her happiest moments, were interrupted by one or another of them. Enid, of course, was harmless. She was only a colorless little doll-baby. Even so, Rosemary considered it worse than thoughtless for her sister to allow her to intrude upon this family on an intimate occasion such as this.

And she couldn't help feeling as if the behavior of the others were singular. Her father couldn't, of course, say anything; but it seemed to Rosemary as if her mother might have told Jack to take Enid straight home. And they might all have carried themselves otherwise. They needn't have acted as if they were happy to have Enid in Rosemary's place. A

stranger meeting them would take Enid for one of the family,—for the favorite member, indeed!

On a sudden, Rosemary turned from the window. Rushing to the clothes-press, she seized a hat of Sally's and ran out the side door and down the street. The others were far in advance and were walking faster now, and she would have to run all the way to catch them. But her excitement gave her a momentary false strength, and she flew swiftly over the flagged walks.

The street leading to the station turned from the avenue opposite the common. Before she was half way thither, a pain in her side compelled Rosemary to pause. She waited only a few seconds, but she could run no further, and, starting to walk with her hand pressed against her side, the girl had an agonizing sense not only of not overtaking the others, but even of not reaching the station in time.

For the others were hurrying now, and—but what was that? The others turned the corner, but her step-father had stopped. He seemed to be waiting. Was it for her? Had someone, perhaps, told him she was coming up the avenue, and was he waiting for her—was he risking losing his train for her?

Ah, no! Not at all. Rosemary stopped short. There was the January girl coming out of the post office. He was waiting for her! Her heart like lead, Rosemary watched her step-father as he removed his cap, and stopped to talk with the January girl—for some minutes as it seemed to Rosemary. Finally he

shook hands, turned and strode on. What tremendous strides! The train must be almost due!

In any event, Rosemary would have made no further effort. Had she had half an hour, she would have acted in the same way. The moment he disappeared, the girl turned sharply and hastened home, regardless of the sharp pain in her side. Reaching her own room, she shut herself in and gave way to an agony of tears.

CHAPTER XVI

THE school-master's second summer apart from his family was long and lonely, but it was less unpleasant, for his mind was at ease with regard to Rosemary, or comparatively at ease. In any event, the situation concerning the girl was vastly improved, so that any lingering uncertainty he had should not, perhaps, be called discomfort. He had declared himself to be reconciled to a certain disappointment in her, and he had no reason to feel that sense of her remissness increased. She wrote to him frequently herself, sweet letters with a charm of their own, and her mother continually gave glowing accounts of her.

At the close of the summer he was to have taken Mrs. Anstruther to the shore for a week, and they had both looked forward to the holiday eagerly, speaking of it constantly in their daily letters. But returning, he found Rosemary still languid, and insisted upon sending her away with her mother for a fortnight, instead. He got Mrs. Putnam to come in, and devoted himself to the other children during their mother's absence.

Rosemary had been loath to go, but had yielded perforce. But she threw on devotion, and the more when it was undivided, and she returned home almost

another girl. As they drew near Greenwich Town on the day of their return, Mrs. Anstruther was suddenly struck by the extent of her daughter's improvement, as she glanced at the girl who was deep in reverie, her eyes gazing further away than the edge of the landscape without the window.

Rosemary wore a plain linen frock with a loose jacket of the same material and a broad-rimmed Leghorn hat. Her hair, parted and waving about her lovely brow, hung below her waist in a thick plait. Her lips were wistful, her eyes dreamy, and the color deepened and receded in her cheek without dying out. She was such a vision of loveliness that suddenly Mrs. Anstruther caught her breath in dismay. But egoist as she was, Rosemary had no vanity. She was as little aware of her mother's admiration as of that which her beauty constantly arrested from strangers.

The girl had been musing upon her happy summer. Perhaps it had been the happiest she had ever known? Everyone had been so dear and so affectionate. Her step-father's letters had been wonderful, and could anyone have been friendlier and dearer than he since his return? O it was better than she had dreamed a year ago!

But the deep breath of contentment she drew seemed to turn to a sigh. No, no, it was not better than she had dreamed after her awakening a year since. Deep in her heart, Rosemary knew that the relation between herself and her father wasn't what it might have been. It wasn't even what it had been—

before New Year's. He was good to her, but—he was sorry for her. He treated her like a cripple or an invalid. He wasn't frank and simple and free with her as he was with Ned Mitchell or Sally or—the January girl.

She turned from the window.

"Mother, I'm going to work ever and ever so hard at school this year," she asseverated with almost a pleading tone in her voice. "I'm going to try to get the prize and go to college."

"You can go to college anyhow," said her mother. "Daddy means to send you."

"O but mother, I don't want him to spend all that money!" the girl cried. "If I'd get the prize, he could use the money on the old Anstruther place. And anyhow, wouldn't he be pleased if I should get it?"

"Possibly, though father doesn't believe in prizes, dear. He wishes very much Rod Whitney had chosen some other way of spending his money on Greenwich Town."

Rosemary sighed. "Well, he'd like me to be a good enough scholar to win it?" she persisted.

Her mother gazed at her in troubled fashion. "He thinks you're an excellent scholar as it is, dear."

Again Rosemary sighed. "You're not—somehow, you don't seem sympathetic, mother," she said reproachfully, as she pulled off her hat and rested her head against her mother's shoulder.

Mrs. Anstruther stroked the soft dusky hair.

"Why not, child?" she asked.

"You don't—*encourage* me. I want so very much to please daddy. He's been so good to me. And yet, everything I say, you sort of throw cold water on."

"I don't mean to do that, Rosemary, but I can't help rather wondering. You say you want to please father——"

Rosemary raised her head. "Surely, mother, you don't doubt me?" she cried, her eyes full of pain.

"I only wonder if you don't mistake yourself, dear. Sometimes I feel that it isn't so much that you want to please father as it is that you want him to be pleased whatever you choose to do."

"Why, Mother Greenaway!" cried Rosemary in amazed reproach.

"Don't get excited, Rosemary. Let me tell you how it looks to me. You know as well as I do that there's one thing father would like to have you do above all else because he believes it right and thinks that you'd be a better girl for doing it. And yet you never dream of doing that. You'll go out of your way to do anything else, but the one thing he truly wishes you to do, you never even consider."

Rosemary had nothing to say. She was impressed by her mother's words, yet not convinced. However, she pondered over the matter up to the time of the opening of the academy, and after a long, silent struggle brought herself to a desperate resolve. She said to herself she would make friends with that awful January girl. She would humble herself before that disagreeable and ill-bred person. She would be a

martyr all through her last year of the academy for the sake of pleasing her father and proving to her mother that her aim was single.

She wasn't sure how she was to begin, but she had fixed the time. And it was characteristic of Rosemary that this was to be not the first but the second day of school. But alas! on the very first day, which had been in the nature of an ovation for Rosemary, the January girl stopped by her desk, and Rosemary forgot everything but her haughty surprise at the other girl's assurance in so presuming upon slight acquaintance.

"Rather jolly to be back, isn't it, Miss Greenaway?" said Janice jauntily, though her eyes were full of wistfulness.

"In certain ways," returned Rosemary icily, "though I was sorry to have the summer end."

"I suppose you're all fine and dandy again?" Jan persisted.

"Thank you, Miss January, I'm very well."

Jan's color was high, but she made another effort.

"Going in for the prize?" she inquired pleasantly.

"I suppose everyone is obliged to try for it, though naturally I don't care to do so as father doesn't believe in prizes. O, there's Jane. If you'll pardon me, Miss January, I'll go give her a message I have for her."

As she talked rather at random with Jane Clement, Rosemary was aware that the January girl had joined Ned and Charley, who were fast friends again, and was making them laugh uproariously. Jan was sup-

posed to be a mimic, and Rosemary, believing her to be ridiculing her, flushed angrily.

As the schoolmaster joined the group of which the January girl was a member, it came to Rosemary that he had probably witnessed her encounter with her. Her cheeks burned more deeply, and on a sudden she remembered the resolve she had made. It came to her coldly that it was absolutely impossible of fulfilment.

But she fought the battle over again, and after a little brought herself to the point where she felt strong enough to fling herself to the lions. But she didn't fling herself. The days passed and the weeks, and she hadn't made any beginning towards fulfilling the duty she had taken upon herself before school opened.

It was the easier to postpone action because things at home were so pleasant and comfortable, and because in spite of her avowed contempt for it, she was very much absorbed in working for the prize. She had never studied so hard before, and results were commensurate in everything except geometry. Even in that she did fairly well until it came to original work, which was all but impossible to the girl. Jan, who was clever in mathematics, as indeed in all her studies, realized Rosemary's difficulty almost poignantly, and longed with all her heart to offer the other girl help. But she dared not venture a second time.

After the very first, the behavior of the January girl in school had been all that could have been desired. It had continued straight through to commencement. But during the fall term, Jan found it more difficult to

check her spirits, which were perhaps unnaturally high. Repulsed by Rosemary, she flung herself rather recklessly into the sports of the others. A real favorite now among them, as the crisp autumn air fired her blood, it became increasingly difficult for the girl to resist the temptation to amuse them with her pranks in school hours as well as outside. Late one afternoon towards the close of November, she suddenly broke out.

Mr. Anstruther was holding a class in physical geography, illustrating certain belts of climates by means of colored maps. While his back was turned, Jan made herself absurd by so holding the loose ends of her braid between her teeth that they became fierce mustachios, plastering her hair down on her forehead, putting a small circular mirror over one eye for a monocle and making languishing grimaces. Within a short time everyone about her was hilarious in a stifled manner, Charley Clement in particular being nearly convulsed. Of course the school-master realized that something was going on among the seniors, and hadn't much doubt as to who was the ringleader. But every time he turned around, Jan's eyes were demurely resting upon her open book. No sooner would he return to the map, however, than the suppressed merriment became evident.

Finally he stepped down from the platform. Jan had dropped her mustachios, slipped the mirror up her sleeve, and run her fingers through her hair. When she felt his eyes upon her, she looked up innocently.

"Miss January, have you prepared your geometry for to-morrow?" he asked sharply.

"Not yet," returned Jan promptly, adding, "but soon" under her breath. Whereupon Charley Clement had an appalling fit of choking.

"The whole class seems to have a surprising amount of leisure, considering that the three original propositions given out for to-morrow are the most difficult you have had," he said coolly. "That being the case, I shall accept nothing short of a perfect lesson from anyone."

Jan, assuming an expression of innocent virtue, began industriously drawing geometrical diagrams, turning them into grotesques with great flat-sided heads and wiry little legs, and no one around her accomplished anything more that day. But when the bell rang and she glanced towards the desk, it struck the girl suddenly that Mr. Anstruther looked very tired. Her heart smote her as it came to her that he had been very tired, too, on the night of her party. But he had not spared himself. If he had, where would she be now? Assuredly, she wouldn't have been keeping half the class laughing during this whole period. Overcome by remorse, she waited after the others had disappeared to speak to him. But he had gone directly to a meeting of the school committee in another room of the building without even stopping to put away his books. Jan went home very soberly. How could she ever wait until morning to own up?

Rosemary, also, had lingered after school. Filled

with dismay that the January girl's behavior should be visited upon the whole class, Rosemary, who had scarcely glanced off her book during the period, remained in her seat to see if she could finish the proposition she had been at work upon. Surprised and greatly encouraged by solving it, she made a triumphant Q.E.D. and moved to the further corner of the room for better light and started the second.

It had grown very dim even in her corner when the door opened softly. Believing that it was her father and that he would scold her for straining her eyes, Rosemary started. But seeing that it was the January girl, she shrank back.

Relieved that she hadn't been discovered, she held her breath until the other should have gone. But instead of going to her own seat for something she had forgotten, as Rosemary had expected her to do, the January girl had stolen to the platform and stood behind the master's desk. Rosemary was horrified to hear the cover of the desk raised and to see Janice peering into the depths. She averted her eyes quickly, and after a few moments the other girl stole out.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR a long time Rosemary crouched in her dark corner, feeling stunned. Her first thought was of relief that she hadn't carried out her resolve of making friends with the January girl. Badly as she had thought of her, she had never dreamed of anything like this; that she would steal into the schoolroom and go through the school-master's desk! How very angry her father would be to know it. He wouldn't endure that sort of thing, even from the January girl.

She couldn't get her mind back upon her work. She drew another diagram, but even to her unmathematical vision, three right angles on one side of a straight line appeared a queer combination, and she tore it up. As she started upon another, she was conscious of straining her eyes, and she nearly jumped from her seat when the door opened again. But again it was the January girl.

She repeated her former procedure almost exactly, except that she wasn't so quiet and didn't linger. As soon as she had gone, Rosemary, filled with impotent indignation, went to the desk, raised the lid and looked in to see if she could ascertain what the January girl had wanted.

She started violently at what she saw plainly in

spite of the dusk. A large blank book in which the school-master had recorded various different solutions of the original propositions in geometry, a book which everyone in the class knew by sight, lay on top of everything else, opened at one of the propositions given out for to-morrow. As she dropped the lid down hastily, Rosemary understood that the January girl must have taken it out, used it as long as she wished, and returned it.

As she gathered her books to go home, she wondered how long this had been going on. It was certainly careless of her father to leave the book where it was so readily accessible. She wondered if she might warn him? But no, he would never stand that. It would seem to him like telling tales. She went to the desk, closed the book and put it underneath the big record book, and hurried out of the room.

But as she put on her wraps, she was seized with apprehension. Her father would be vexed to have her meddle with the books in his desk, even for his own good. She stood irresolute. Then she went back, drew out the note book and put it on top again. Trembling lest he appear, she tried to find the page so as to leave it as the January girl had left it,—and presumably had found it. It was so dark that she had to bring her eyes close to the page. When finally she had found the place, her hands trembled so that the lid dropped down with a bang. But she was thankful that she had done it.

All that evening Rosemary was very quiet. A curi-

ous sensation possessed her, an unaccountable strangeness. She worked out the other two propositions,—a feat which would have been a matter of wonder to her at another moment,—and went to her room earlier than usual. She sat by the window in the darkness a long time, and after she had gone to bed lay awake wondering. Was it that she was shocked by the discovery of the January girl's dishonor?

It was the second of the propositions at which the book had been opened. And it was the second for which the January girl had a demonstration different from anyone else's in class next day. As she went to the board, Rosemary watched her with a sort of fascination. The sensation of strangeness that had possessed her the night before was with her still, and a curious clearness of vision seemed to accompany it. For the first time since the January girl's arrival, Rosemary saw her as she was. Tall and slender with a suggestion of superabundant strength and vitality that seemed to extend even to the heavy plait of her chestnut hair, Jan's thin, long hands, which were rough like a boy's, handled the crayon with singular dexterity, drawing the diagram without the loss of a movement. And her demonstration was similarly easy and finished. Perhaps her voice might be called loud (Rosemary wasn't sure) but no one had to strain one's attention, and it might be that such clear, distinct utterance was a courtesy to the teacher.

Rather chary of praise, the school-master didn't realize that he commended the January girl's work

more frequently than that of anyone else. Now he praised her for what he secretly considered a remarkable piece of work, and told the class he had never known a student to prove the theorem in that manner before.

Rosemary's heart beat quickly. Again she glanced at the January girl. Her cheeks were flushed—very prettily so, and her eyes rested demurely on her book. Rosemary's own cheeks burned all that day.

But just before the hour of closing, they paled suddenly. For the senior class was asked to remain after the others were dismissed.

Her heart beat wildly as they were called down to a recitation bench before the platform, and she couldn't bear to glance towards the January girl, who must be enduring agony. The school-master announced quietly but sadly that he had had evidence that since yesterday's lesson, someone had had access to his notebook which contained the demonstrations of the original propositions in geometry. His only course of action was to go through the class and ask each member if he knew anything about it.

Rosemary sat at the further end with the January girl four places before her. She listened to sixteen clear negatives. Then her heart seemed to stop as the question was repeated: "Miss January, do you know anything about it?"

"No, Mr. Anstruther," said Jan promptly.

Why did her answer strike Rosemary like a blow? Why should she care? The next thing she realized,

the question had come to her. In her confusion, Rosemary had returned a negative before she realized that she couldn't truthfully deny that she knew anything about the matter. Hastily she corrected herself, speaking in rather dazed fashion.

"I mean, yes, sir," she faltered. "I do."

"Do what?" cried the school-master in amazement.

"Know about it," she said faintly, wondering what she should ever say if he asked her what she knew.

He stared at her a moment, then dismissed the others, asking her to remain.

"How you startled me, Rosemary," he said kindly after the door had closed on the others. "I suppose you know, somehow, who did this thing, which, I don't mind owning to you, hurts me terribly. Of course I don't expect you to tell on anyone, but as a matter of formality I shall have to ask you certain questions. You had nothing to do with it yourself?"

Rosemary considered briefly. She had just decided that she could truthfully answer no when he added: "You didn't, of course, touch the book."

"Why, yes, father, I *touched* it," she said deprecatingly.

"You didn't—open it?" he said in a strange voice.

"I opened it," she said in a dazed way, "only——"

He was staring at her.

"O Rosemary, I can't believe it," he said so sadly as to show that he did believe it. "Surely you cannot mean that you went to my desk and looked at that book?"

Rosemary almost smiled. But she mustn't let him mistake further. The only difficulty was to explain without involving the January girl. For her unusual solution of the second theorem would of course point attention straight to her as the culprit.

"I looked at it—just glanced at it," she said gently, "but I didn't——"

But his face so confused her that she couldn't go on. Her own face flooded with color.

"Rosemary, you understand, of course, that it was a dishonorable thing to do?" he said in a pained voice.

The tone rather than the words gave Rosemary pause. Had it been characterized by anger instead of pain, it wouldn't have hurt her so. She realized that she must be all heedfulness. Now that her father had labeled the act dishonorable, she must do anything rather than involve the January girl. And she endeavored to thrust into the background of her mind all other aspects of the matter lest she betray the other girl inadvertently.

She started as her step-father repeated the question, and the perplexity in his eyes became pain. For he thought the girl winced at the ugly word.

But as her soft brown eyes met his, a sort of puzzled wistfulness was their dominant expression. In truth, the girl hardly knew how to answer. What she had done was not dishonorable, but did not his question mean more than it said? But she must speak. He was patient to an extreme degree, but he wouldn't repeat a question more than once.

Just as he would have spoken her name sharply, an inspiration seemed to come to her.

"Not dishonorable, daddy," she said softly, "for I—didn't get any help."

Her eyes fell before the curious expression on his face. In her confusion, not realizing at all what she was saying, she bungled the matter by adding:

"It was too dark, you know. I could hardly see putting my face down close."

"Rosemary Greenaway! I can't understand you, child!" he cried. "Don't you know—you must know that that makes no difference! It is the intention that counts. Surely you cannot think that being withheld by accident from committing the wrong one contemplates makes one iota of difference! I never could have believed it! O Rosemary, you have hurt your own soul!"

CHAPTER XVIII

ROSEMARY became deathly pale. Now first she realized what had happened. She had vaguely felt the meshes tightening about herself, but indifferently. Her concern had been to keep the January girl from being involved even by a thread. That being done, she was confident of extricating herself. But now she seemed suddenly to find herself fast in the toils.

An agony of apprehension seized her. She looked up beseechingly.

"Don't say that, daddy, please, don't—think it," she begged. "I can't seem to explain, only—it isn't really so bad as you——"

He looked at her eagerly, searchingly.

"It isn't true, then?" he asked. "You didn't go to my desk and look at the book, Rosemary?"

"I went to the desk, and I—*saw* the book," the girl faltered, "but——"

"But it was too dark to get any assistance?" he almost groaned.

She tried to speak but choked.

"Perhaps you had better go home, now, Rosemary," he said gently, "and leave me to think this over. If you wish, we will speak of it again this evening. What-

ever you feel like saying to me then, I shall be more than ready to hear. And don't be afraid. I won't be hard on you. Somehow, I can't help feeling as if I myself must be to blame for this. I can't understand it even dimly otherwise."

"O daddy, you're not—not at all!" she cried warmly.

As she walked slowly home, Rosemary wondered that she hadn't collapsed under the blow. She wondered that she didn't now long to throw herself down and cry her heart out. For now she understood clearly that she shouldn't be able to clear herself of this terrible charge—of dishonor!

And yet, she wasn't really cast down. She felt sad, but not overwhelmed. Something buoyed her up,—something inexplicable—something, she concluded vaguely, that connected itself with that sense of strangeness that had been upon her since yesterday.

Later, it came to her in a flash. She sat by her window in her own room in a state of pensiveness that was like a dream. The January girl was safe! That was what had buoyed her up; and the reason therefor was—she was sorry for her, terribly sorry. Perhaps she had never been so sorry for anyone before in all her life. And she didn't hate her any more. On a sudden she knew that the January girl wasn't vulgar—that she never had been. And she wasn't dishonorable. She had simply yielded to sudden temptation. And now—now, she knew that she had done it

and that the deed was irrevocable. The consciousness must go with her whithersoever she went. So great, so deep was her pity, that Rosemary almost loved the January girl!

On Monday, the school-master kept the seniors after school and announced that Rosemary Greenaway was debarred from trying for the prize. Rosemary, who, characteristically, hadn't thought of any sequel or of any further publicity, was stunned and white, but not startlingly pale, for every other face in the class was either unnaturally white or unnaturally red. Such was the sorrow and amazement and sympathy of all the others, indeed, that it would have been difficult for a stranger to select the guilty one.

Afterwards Rosemary lingered in her seat, putting her books away and getting her things ready to carry home, until the others should have left the building. She felt that she couldn't face them until she should be more accustomed to her position,—to her disgrace, as she supposed she must look upon it. But when finally she entered the cloak room, she saw the January girl standing alone in one corner, her head buried in her arm, sobbing almost wildly.

Rosemary hesitated. She could easily get her wraps and slip out unheard. Of course it was all the January girl's fault. Yet she seemed to be crying her heart out. Perhaps she had wanted to win the prize so badly that she hadn't once thought how bad it was to look in the book until after the school-master had spoken to the class. And after that, quite likely she

hadn't dared confess. Rosemary herself could understand how one would fear to face her father's scorn. If she herself had really done it, she couldn't have endured it.

She dropped one of her overshoes to announce her presence. Then she went to the January girl and touched her shoulder gently.

"Don't cry," she said softly, "please, Jan, don't cry. Don't feel so badly. Honestly I don't mind. And it's all over with, anyhow."

Jan's tears ceased suddenly. Had she heard aright? Had Rosemary, the cold and haughty Miss Greenaway, called her Jan in that gentle voice? She raised her head and dried her eyes.

"O, but you wanted to try for the prize," she said warmly. "And——"

"I don't think I wanted to so badly as—some of the others, Jan," Rosemary returned gently. "And anyhow, I hadn't much chance. I'm so stupid in geometry."

As she seemed to see the January girl flush at the allusion, she smiled quickly to reassure her.

"It's all right, Jan," she said bravely. She hardly understood why, but somehow it seemed to her generous of Jan to accept the situation just as she wanted her to, and not protest against what she had done, against her shouldering the responsibility for the wrong. She held out her hand.

Jan seized it warmly. In her ardor she would have liked to carry it to her lips. A few moments later,

Anstruther, glancing carelessly out the window, was amazed to see the two girls leaving the grounds together, arm in arm, with every appearance of friendliness. He felt as if he must mistake; but he couldn't mistake Rosemary, and the tall girl in green was certainly the January girl. Well, wonders would never cease for anyone related to Rosemary!

He had been terribly cut up over this affair of the notebook, taking it harder than anyone else. He hadn't, however, from the first, considered it as being the same thing in Rosemary that it would have been in case of any one of the others in the class or in school. It wasn't that she hadn't as nice a sense of honor. It was that the girl was so intense, so single-minded, so obtuse to all other points of view than her own, that she could almost do wrong rightly. He knew how she still mourned over the fact of his spending so much money to cancel her father's indebtedness. It came to him almost directly, that, knowing he was intending to send her to college, she had taken it into her muddled head that it was absolutely imperative that she win the prize and save him the expense in that way. Only her geometry hindered. He recollected that he had announced on Thursday that he would expect a perfect lesson from everyone next day. Had she felt justified to use any means to bring about the desired and, to her mind, imperative end?

He had reluctantly decided that that was what she had done. But now, on a sudden, seeing her walking with the January girl in apparent friendliness, he

changed his mind; and now his theory was less unflattering to Rosemary. At the beginning of the autumn, his wife had told him that she believed Rosemary was planning to "make up to" the January girl in order to please him. It came to him now that possibly this was a dramatic method she had taken of accomplishing her purpose. He sighed as he asked himself whether that foolish, wrong-headed girl had not deliberately and intentionally cheated in order to give over the prize for which she herself longed painfully to the girl against whom she had conceived a violent prejudice? She had declared that she hadn't got any help from the book. That seemed to prove the theory as well as the fact that it was all so like her. Rosemary couldn't do things simply and naturally; it wasn't in her, apparently. She must demolish a dyke to fill a dipper.

The more he considered it, the more was he convinced. Rosemary's conduct since Friday had surely borne it out. He had been amazed and pained that she hadn't seemed conscious of deep guilt, and she hadn't been greatly cast down. Quite likely she hadn't anticipated the consequences, for she had looked so startled and daunted just now, that his heart had ached for her. And yet, as she went along with Janice she was light of foot and quick of step. In truth she appeared quite undaunted.

He couldn't help feeling intense relief. It was an awkward, bungling, wholly unnecessary thing to do, and yet there was something rather fine about it,—a certain lavishness which, like other lavish actions or

impulses, excites admiration even while it connotes waste, extravagance and want of judgment. At the same time, he didn't know what to do about it. Apparently there was nothing to do but to let the girl take the hard consequences of her quixotic action, and to stand ready to help if she should falter. And meantime, he said to himself, he would endeavor, early and late, to instil something of common sense, balance and proportion into her head.

CHAPTER XIX

EVEN now, the postmaster would sometimes catch himself glancing across the street at a certain moment in the late afternoon, as if he expected to see Roger Greenaway, the poet, hastening forth from bondage at the bank to meet his daughter at the common below. And so doing, Billy Perkins would sigh, or smile ruefully, as he wished he might have watched his old classmate rather more sympathetically at the time when his appearance had been as much a regular feature of the day as the arrival of the mails. For, like that of many another citizen of Greenwich Town, his heart had relented and warmed towards the dead poet since that Old Home Day of more than a year ago.

The memorial fountain was visible from the windows of the post office, and at moments such as these, Billy Perkins was wont to glance thither for the relief the sight of the monument afforded. But one afternoon of late November, as he looked across the street and then down to the edge of the common, he was almost as surprised at the sight which met his eyes as they unconsciously sought the monument, as he would have been to see Roger Greenaway coming forth from the bank. For he saw Rosemary Greenaway and the

January girl standing side by side before the fountain in an attitude which indicated intimate conversation or intimate silence.

The older people in Greenwich Town were as familiar with the daily course of events at the academy as they were with the events of the world at large as related in the newspapers. Wherefore, the postmaster had known long since that Rosemary Greenaway had never had anything to do with the latest comer at the academy since she had entered her class nearly a year ago. He knew, too, as everyone else understood, that Rosemary had been so inhospitable that her stepfather had felt constrained himself to atone for her demeanor by making special effort to welcome the stranger and make her feel at home. He had even attended her party—something the like of which he had never done before.

And here were the two girls to-day, arm in arm, and before that monument, of all places! Why, Rosemary had never, so far as he knew, come hither even in company with one of the other Greenaway children. Well,—Billy Perkins gave it up. Had anyone asked him what it all meant, he would have raised his eyebrows and replied in the convenient, current phrase, "*Search me!*"

Later, the girls came into the post office together to get the January girl's mail—Anstruther always came for his himself, and none of the children ventured to anticipate him. And more than ever, Mr. Perkins marveled at Rosemary. It was not that the girl was

so radiantly beautiful—happiness always added something to the girl's loveliness, even though it had seemed flawless before—it was the manner in which she carried it all off. Whether it was because of unusual dignity, an air of royalty the girl had, or because of her utter lack of self-consciousness, she bore herself now as if she were doing the usual, familiar thing. She, who had never had a friend of her own years, who was rarely seen walking with a schoolmate, appeared now with this January girl as if they had been intimate friends for years.

As the two girls had set forth together at the close of school that afternoon, a sudden gust of wind had sent a wave of little curled yellow leaves scurrying across their path. And Jan, who loved poetry, but had never voluntarily repeated a line of verse other than limericks aloud before, found herself quoting as naturally as if she had been in her bed at night.

“‘The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods and meadows brown and
sere.
Heaped in the hollows of the wood, the autumn leaves lie
dead;
They rustle to the eddying wind and——’”

As Jan hesitated, Rosemary softly capped the line.

“I think they're the *sweetest* of the year, too, don't you, Rosemary?” the January girl cried warmly. And Rosemary agreed with quiet eagerness.

“Suppose we go to the woods now, and see the leaves in the hollows. Shall we?” Jan asked.

Rosemary acquiesced happily, but as the other girl would have turned about in the direction of Larcom's woods, she stopped her.

"Perhaps, Jan, you would like to see Beulah Wood, where my father and I used to go?" she asked wistfully and not quite steadily. "The little hollow he loved where the little brook runs through will be heaped with beech leaves now. Don't you love them—beeches—best of all?"

"O Rosemary, I'm ashamed to say I don't know what beeches are," Jan confessed. "You see, I've lived in cities all my life and mostly out West, and I don't believe they grow there or in the parks. But I would love to learn what they are, and—O Rosemary, I should feel so happy and—well, *blessed*, if you should feel willing to take me to the place where you used to go with your father. But don't go one step if it will make you feel badly."

"It will make me feel—*rested*," said Rosemary wistfully.

Jan didn't understand, but she loved the mystery of Rosemary as she loved everything about her. As they drew near the common on their way to Beulah Wood, she proposed that they stop and look at the monument together. She didn't say that she had never before felt free to tarry beside the monument to Rosemary's father. For as yet neither of the girls had alluded to the past.

A week ago to-day, indeed, they hadn't been on speaking terms. Nevertheless, since the afternoon

they had first walked away from the academy arm in arm, they had been inseparable. They had talked of a multitude of things, but they had not mentioned the year that was just behind them. Somehow, it had been tacitly disregarded. So far as their attitude indicated, the January girl might have entered the class that very week instead of some four dozen weeks earlier.

But the more distant past was another thing. Now, the girls read the inscription together silently.

"It's almost like a poem itself, it's so sweet," murmured Jan.

"Daddy wrote it," said Rosemary softly. "I call Mr. Anstruther *daddy* at home. He didn't wish to take father's name. He was father's old friend and schoolmate, and he—he cares for father's poems. I think he loves them."

"What a comfort that must be to you!" Jan exclaimed as they went on their way. "I suppose you talk them over together, Rosemary?"

Rosemary sighed. "No, Jan, not often," she admitted. "Daddy speaks of the poems and—of father, and I am—O mostly just *dumb*."

She gazed at the other girl with tears in her lovely dark eyes.

"O Jan, you could never understand what it is to be like me!" she cried beseechingly. "It's as if I were tongue-tied or a foreigner. I want to speak out and let—people understand that I appreciate things, but I

just can't. It's as if things were locked up inside me and the key were lost."

They were within the shadow of Beulah Wood. Jan put her arm gently about Rosemary's shoulders.

"You're not dumb, Rosemary, you are just—silent, sweetly silent," she protested warmly. "And it's perfectly awful to be glib. If you are always ready with a word, your words don't mean anything. I think you must be like your father. Perhaps he never talked much? I have heard how handsome he was and how like a poet, and I have thought of him as rather melancholy and silent. Didn't he say what he had to say mostly in his poems?"

Rosemary admitted that such was the fact, and appeared to find solace in Jan's theory. Slipping her arm through hers, she led the January girl about, and, though visibly moved, showed her the spots that were sacred to her. And curiously, words came to her now with a certain amount of ease.

Jan looked and listened and commented with a sense of reverence for the poet as genuine as it was grateful to the poet's daughter. As they were at length reluctantly leaving the grove, she rather hesitatingly expressed her desire to hear some of Roger Greenaway's verses, if Rosemary didn't mind.

Rosemary was more than willing. But she paled as she strove to quote an especial favorite, and had to wait a little.

At that moment, Waggles came tearing up to them, and created an interruption. The puppy, as he was



“ You are not dumb, Rosemary, you are just silent, sweetly silent ”

still rightly called, for he hadn't yet begun to grow up, knew Jan well from his frequent visits with Jack at the January home; but the combination of Rosemary and Jan was new to him. It was also a matter of great and pleasurable excitement, and he proceeded to celebrate the occasion in his most freakish and eccentric fashion.

Rosemary smiled indulgently.

"I couldn't have said it without crying, anyhow, Jan. I'll bring the book to-morrow, and we'll read them together," she proposed.

CHAPTER XX

FOR two weeks Rosemary Greenaway and Janice were what is called inseparable, and none doubted that the new friendship would endure indefinitely,—least of all, the two persons most concerned. Jan, who had longed for a year for Rosemary's mere toleration, was deliriously happy in the other girl's sudden and complete surrender. And Rosemary, who had never had an intimate friend since the death of her father, again savored the peculiar delight which her temperament craved—the sensation of being all in all to someone for whom she cared deeply. And strange to say, she cared deeply, indeed, for the January girl.

But the strangeness was not in the fact itself, but in Rosemary's yielding to it, or perhaps ceasing to struggle against it. Unwilling admiration and respect must have been unconsciously mingled with her hostility towards Jan for some time, for mere pity could not have been so potent. Jan's warmth and strength and generosity of nature were after all qualities most likely to appeal to Rosemary. She had been in the latter's thoughts for nearly a year; and Rosemary's strong feeling may have been, and probably was, gradually losing its ill will unawares without losing its intensity. In any event, now she forgot everything

and yielded herself to Janice's big, protecting, enthusiastic devotion as a spent swimmer might rest in the embrace of a rescuing lifeboat.

Nevertheless, in spite of warmth and intensity on both sides and a singular attraction of opposite natures, the situation couldn't endure,—and that not because of any "Blow hot, blow cold" reason, but because of insecurity of foundation. Strong affection demands a basis of respect, and however one may palliate the offense, respect refuses to attend upon dishonorable action.

Not only did the girls not allude to the past year, but they never mentioned the matter which had brought them together. There were legion other things to discuss; indeed, it seemed as if each had been waiting for years and years for the other. Moreover their constant companionship, the fascination of having that buoyant creature of frank and charming humor and high spirits for her devoted slave, acted as an anodyne upon Rosemary. She forgot that she was in disgrace, forgot the January girl's responsibility therefor, and was oblivious of her step-father's perplexity, even while she basked in the knowledge that her new happiness was a source of genuine gratification to him.

But her happiness was threatened. Rosemary was proud and sensitive. She had been stunned, and her mind had been immediately distracted; but when consciousness began to return, pain attended upon it. Presently, she flinched to realize that while she had been living in a happy dream, her father and her class-

mates were believing that she had deliberately gone to his desk and consulted his note-book for help in geometry. And Jan—O, she wanted Jan to let things go on just as they were; but she didn't want her not to care what the others believed of *her*, and—now she began to want her to speak of it; just a word of acknowledgment.

A fortnight passed. Two weeks from the day when her disgrace had been published in school, Rosemary was again alone in the empty room after school. She had been suffering keenly all day; her perturbation and distress had told upon her lessons, and she had asked permission to remain and copy an essay that should have been handed in at noon.

It was the first night for two weeks that she and Jan hadn't left the building together. But Jan had understood and hadn't even lingered in saying good-by; for she knew Rosemary had given her word that she wouldn't do anything after dusk began to gather, and dusk was very early in these December days. As she left, however, Rosemary's heart sank. More than ever she craved the excitement that Jan's presence induced.

Entering feverishly upon her task, she was through five minutes before she must have stopped. Laying the paper on the desk, she yielded to an uncontrollable impulse. Her father wouldn't be back for his things for an hour yet; and stealing to the farthest, and this time the darkest corner, Rosemary dropped her head

on the desk before her and gave way to passionate weeping.

Half an hour passed. The room was nearly dark when she heard a step outside. This time she knew it was not her father. No one but Jan had that light swinging step, and Rosemary's sore heart leaped wildly. Jan had somehow guessed how she needed and wanted her, and had come to her!

As a matter of fact, Jan never dreamed that Rosemary was still in the building. All through the delirious happiness of the two weeks, Jan too had suffered—whenever she was not with Rosemary,—vaguely at first, then more and more consciously, because of Rosemary's plight. More than anyone else in school, she realized the reproach that clung to her name; more maturely than any other, she felt the seriousness of it. After the very first, she had decided that Rosemary must be innocent. She had tried to speak to her of the subject, but had waited, realizing a certain beneficent numbness on Rosemary's part. On this Monday, realizing that this had passed, she had meant to endeavor to bring the matter up after school. Being prevented from that, and deeply moved by the appeal in Rosemary's eyes, she had decided not to wait, but to set out at once to establish her innocence.

She had already asked Jack whether his sister ever walked in her sleep, and that possibility had been eliminated. She had no clue in mind, and felt that she was taking a leap in the dark. But she plunged in fearlessly. Selecting her own reading ever since she could

remember, Jan was familiar with many books which the other girls of Greenwich Town weren't allowed to read, and had devoured an amazing number of detective stories. Now with naïve, unconscious pride, she endeavored at least to begin operations systematically.

The plan she evolved in the hour that brought twilight and dusk was the occasion of her reappearance at the academy. As Jan understood the situation, Mr. Anstruther had left the note-book in his desk on the day he had made the sad discovery, and upon his return had found evidence that someone had, as she put it, "monkeyed" with it. Rosemary had confessed before the class that she knew something about it, and afterwards she must have said enough to implicate herself. Before Jan made any move to investigate Rosemary's conduct, she must be sure that there was no chance for a flaw in the school-master's evidence.

It might, she believed, be a case of mice instead of men. Sherlock Holmes would certainly have begun by examining thoroughly the scene of the mystery, and before she went further it behooved her to search the school-master's desk for possible explanation. Knowing Mr. Anstruther wouldn't return until six, she decided to accomplish this immediately.

Jan had changed much during the last year. In many ways she was as decorous as any of her school-mates, as well as being more spontaneous and attractive than most of them. But in this instance her lack of up-bringing showed disastrously. She didn't realize what a flagrant thing she did in going thus deliberately

to the private property of another. Had she worn a secret service badge under her jacket, the girl couldn't have been more unconcerned.

Entering the room with the certainty that it was empty, she glanced about in a perfunctory way, and made straight for the desk. Raising the cover, she proceeded to investigate the chances of confusion there. Poking and peering about, she reached into each corner, and displaced and replaced every article the enclosure contained. She was deliberate and thorough; finally, convinced that she had finished the job, she dropped the lid and walked calmly from the room, ruminating upon the possibility of any clue having escaped her. And if she had met the school-master at the door, she wouldn't have greatly minded, though she thought it as well to keep her purpose a secret.

Meantime, Rosemary was suffering agony. It seemed as if she could not bear it. She had flung away her reserve and given herself to the January girl wholeheartedly and lavishly. She had overlooked Jan's fault, committed in a moment of temptation, and disregarded the disgrace that had accrued to herself therefrom, only to face—what? The fact that Jan was doubly and trebly unworthy. The sorrow Jan had seemed to feel for her former wrong-doing, the sorrow that had melted Rosemary's last remainder of coldness, must have been only simulated. Otherwise she never would have repeated the action. But she must have gone on with her dishonesty without a

break. In the midst of their intimacy, she must have found time to make periodical visits to the academy to get at the school-master's books. The very help she had given Rosemary had been made possible through her duplicity!

Rosemary flew home and presently had to go to bed with sick headache. Half ill next morning, she was confronted with the necessity of meeting the January girl at school. If she could have ceased to care for her when she discovered that she wasn't worthy of affection it would not have been so hard. But deep in her heart, Rosemary knew that somehow she cared for her in the same way,—that still Jan meant to her more than anyone of her own age had ever done. But she couldn't compromise. She couldn't condone regular, continued dishonor. Neither could she have anything whatever to do with Jan,—she couldn't speak to her. She wished that she hadn't found out what she had, but now that she had discovered it, there could be no half measures.

Finally she decided to write a note. "Dear Jan," she began. But no, she wasn't dear,—at least, she couldn't be, any more. She took another sheet.

"I know all about everything, and I cannot bear the thought of it. I can never speak to you again, and the one favor I ask of you is that you will not try to speak to me. I couldn't possibly talk about it.

"ROSEMARY GREENAWAY."

CHAPTER XXI

JANICE JANUARY was hard hit. The suddenness of the blow as well as its being utterly inexplicable, appalled her. There was a finality about Rosemary's note that forbade discussion or even protest or question. Yesterday, Jan couldn't have understood not begging Rosemary to explain herself. But yesterday they had been friends,—good friends. Today, they were worse than strangers.

Strive as she would, it was long before Jan could imagine any pretext whatever for Rosemary's behavior. Then she began to wonder if somehow Rosemary might have divined that she was attempting to clear her name of stigma? That explanation seemed far-fetched, but there was absolutely nothing else which Rosemary could possibly resent.

The single instance since she had known her that she had wronged Rosemary, the latter could never have known, for it had been only in thought. Jan herself remembered it with especial pain because it had been on the very day before the school-master had made the discovery that turned everything upside down, and she had almost seemed responsible. For on that very day she had wished in her heart that something would happen to Rosemary Greenaway to punish her

for her pride and arrogance. It had happened that on that night, in the midst of Jan's penitence over her misbehavior in school, Enid had repeated something little Em'ly had innocently told her,—that Rosemary thought her vulgar. At the moment, Jan had been so angry that she had not only wanted to call down wrath upon Rosemary's head, but she had felt glad that she had bothered Mr. Anstruther and that he *was* tired, in that he allowed Rosemary to talk so. She had even planned to go on troubling him yet worse; but though the sun may have gone down on her anger, it hadn't lasted much longer, and no one had known of it. She might herself have forgotten it, had it not happened that worse punishment than she had dreamed of descended upon Rosemary, as if because of her malediction.

The only explanation that remained, then, was that Rosemary resented her trying to clear her at the expense of someone who must be exceedingly dear to her. None the less, perhaps all the more, Jan decided to persevere. It was right that Rosemary should be exonerated, and therefore imperative. The business of seeing it through fell to her because, strangely enough, she was the only one who believed Rosemary innocent. Whatever the result so far as she was concerned personally, Jan felt that she must put it through. And being sensible and mature, though at first she had secretly given way to grief and despair, she regained her courage and a measure of cheerfulness. And she began to feel that it must be that at

the same time she was working towards clearing Rosemary's name she would also be working towards the renewal of their friendship.

The school-master's desk having furnished no clue, Jan set about to discover what person there could be whom Rosemary would so shield. There were only two members of the class to whom Rosemary could be said to be otherwise than indifferent,—Ned Mitchell and Jane Clement. Of the two, Rosemary preferred Ned, but Ned would no more have cheated than he would have allowed any other to suffer for him. There remained, then, only Jane.

Jane Clement was a plain, quiet girl, dignified, rather prim, and extremely well behaved. She was a good scholar, and there was no reason why she should have been tempted to consult a key. Furthermore, she was devoted to Rosemary, and even though Rosemary dominated her absolutely, Jan couldn't possibly imagine her allowing Rosemary to shield her.

Reluctantly Jan had decided that her theory didn't hold water. But no substitute suggesting itself, she continued to conjecture in that vein, and suddenly one day light seemed to flash upon her. Someone was calling, "Ned, old man!" and as she recognized Charley Clement's high, girlish voice, Jan seemed to herself to have hit upon the solution.

Charley was devoted to Mr. Anstruther,—so deeply so that it was said that back in the spring his mother had feared that he was going into a decline because he had somehow incurred the school-master's displeas-

ure. Hadn't he, perhaps, succumbed to temptation and fallen, and hadn't Rosemary learned it through Jane and insisted upon shielding him? Charley was a dear boy, if he was a bit of a sissy, and wouldn't intentionally do wrong, but having done so in a moment of weakness, Jan felt that he might be ready to shirk or evade the consequences. He was young, too, the youngest in the class, two years his sister's junior and a year younger than Rosemary. Quite likely he would think it easier for Rosemary to bear the opprobrium than for himself.

For two days Jan watched his recitations closely, particularly in geometry. On the second day, her suspicion seemed to be confirmed. Charley was very shaky in his demonstration, and flushed like a girl and floundered sadly when Mr. Anstruther "sprung" a corollary on him. Both Ned Mitchell and Jane tried to shield him by asking questions to withdraw the school-master's attention from him, and Rosemary appeared distinctly distressed. When, moreover, on the following day, he failed utterly, Charley seemed to be utterly disconsolate.

Jan was too big and warm of heart to harbor contempt. She felt sorry for Charley and almost abashed in her undertaking. She didn't at all relish the notion of dragging the boy to the doom of his merited punishment. It seemed very much the same as telling tales on timid, shrinking little Enid.

But the thought of Enid strengthened her. While pitying and shielding Enid in her physical cowardice,

Jan had never allowed her little sister to give way to moral faint-heartedness. Always, she encouraged the child to be fair and honest and to "own up" whenever she was at fault. And now she seemed to see hope for Charley. If he could be made to see the right and to confess his wrong-doing in a manly way, and to take his medicine, wouldn't it do much towards stiffening and strengthening his moral fiber?

Jan's sore heart took comfort. She and Charley were on very good terms, and it was simple to make a beginning. One afternoon when they were skating, she asked him if he wouldn't come in after supper and work with her on the lesson in geometry for to-morrow. Charley appeared early and they had a happy evening. After working out the problems assigned, at Jan's suggestion, they treated them as puzzles, standing the diagrams on their heads, as it were, and at all sorts of odd angles, and worked them through thus. After that, Charley dropped in frequently to study with his neighbor. Having become accustomed to Jan's raillery and bantering, it did him good. Ned Mitchell welcomed a more manly attitude on the part of his chum, and all of Charley's lessons showed improvement.

One day shortly after the holidays, Mr. Anstruther startled two-thirds of the geometry class by drawing on the board a diagram of a familiar theorem upside down. It was only to be expected that Rosemary should have been all at sea, but it was singular how some of the mathematicians fell before it. It was

still more surprising, however, to have Charley Clement demonstrate it with glib ease. Jan couldn't help laughing out at the expression on the face of Ned Mitchell, who only escaped slipping up on it himself because he wasn't called upon to recite. Mr. Anstruther frowned upon her, but with what she called his cheerful frown.

He commended Charley warmly. The boy flushed.

"I've been studying with someone else lately, Mr. Anstruther," he explained, "and we've turned things upside down and worse. If we hadn't, I couldn't have done anything with this one. I suppose you wouldn't think it unfair to do them together, sir?"

"Not at all, Clement, it's perfectly fair. Each contributes something, and the result is better for each."

"I guess I didn't contribute much—I guess not anything. I just got help," Charley owned; but Mr. Anstruther only smiled.

Ned Mitchell raised his hand. "I've been wondering how it would be about that, if anyone was trying for the prize, Mr. Anstruther?"

"It's hard to say, Mitchell, but if it were unfair for one who is trying for it to study with another, then there's another argument against prizes, to which, as you all know, I seriously object," the school-master returned. "Studying with one another not only gives you a firmer grasp of almost any subject, and the advantage of another's point of view and therefore a broader outlook; but the companionship,—companionship in work as well as in play, adds another real ele-

ment. Wherefore it would seem—always in moderation and good sense and uprightness, and only when you are well towards the end of school—an aid to the business of the school. Nevertheless, when we consider the prize, we are confronted by the question as to whether it is legitimate. How would you feel about it, Clement, in that light?"

"If I had any chance at all, which I haven't, it would be doubled if I studied with Jan," Charley returned in his squeaky voice, and everybody laughed.

"Well, I don't believe that anyone that had a first-rate chance would mind a bit if others that were trying studied together," observed Ned.

"I think you are right, Ned," said the school-master, "yet I don't believe you would be willing to do it yourself after it was pointed out that it gave one an advantage."

"Mr. Anstruther, why do we have the prize at all if you don't believe in them?" Jan inquired earnestly. "Couldn't we vote not to have it?"

The school-master smiled. "There's another side to it," he said. "It means a college education."

"Well, our schooling here at the academy means a lot to us too, Mr. Anstruther," said Ned, "and you think we'd get more out of it without the prize?"

"I think possibly you *might*. Whether you *would* or not is another question," said the school-master smiling. "No one, you know, gets so much out of anything as he might, we elders no more than you young folk."

"May we have the chance to try?" asked Jan. "May we give up the prize?"

"How many would be willing to give it up?" the school-master asked. "The affirmative will raise their hands."

Everyone except Rosemary responded. Being debarred from trying for the prize, the girl didn't feel that she had any vote upon the subject. Unhappily, the others took her action as negative, her step-father among them.

"How many would *rather* give it up?" he asked again.

In more than one face a struggle was evident, and it warmed the heart of the school-master to feel that no one would pretend. Hands came up slowly, but presently twenty had been raised.

The school-master was touched. "Thank you," he said quietly. "I'm very proud to have such a fine showing from the class that entered the academy the year I came, and so seems particularly near to me. However, I don't think we'll make the renunciation. Mr. Rodney Whitney, a classmate of mine at this very academy years ago, and a devoted friend of Greenwich Town, offered the prize to this particular class, and the school committee accepted it. We will go on, I think, and make the best of what was so kindly given."

As he glanced towards the clock, a look of amazement appeared upon his face.

“Well, we have quite forgotten time and space,—even in a geometrical sense,” he explained. “We have run fifteen minutes over the hour, and the class in algebra has lost fifteen minutes,—unless they have put it in in extra hard study?”

Everyone laughed, for the algebra class had been all ears for the discussion going on among the seniors.

CHAPTER XXII

THAT evening when Ned and Charley dropped in at the Januarys', Jan came out of the dark parlor with red eyelids, looking very sober. The girl was utterly at sea again,—at least she hoped she was, for otherwise she couldn't continue to believe Rosemary innocent. Of course, after the discussion in class, there was no further possibility of suspecting Charley. But Rosemary—why hadn't she been willing to vote to give up the prize? She must have wanted it terribly. And yet, no matter how much she longed for it, she would never have committed that dishonorable deed! Jan felt that she could endure anything, but she couldn't bear to believe that Rosemary could do wrong in that way.

They played parchesi until Libby called Enid to go to bed. Then they fell to talking about the discussion in class that morning in regard to the prize. January was dozing in his chair, and they spoke freely.

"I wish Rosemary had voted," remarked Ned, who never made any endeavor to conceal his devotion to Rosemary.

"Jane said perhaps she didn't vote because she couldn't try for it," said Charley eagerly.

"Of course!" cried Jan, relieved by the suggestion.

"If she'd thought she had a right to vote, she'd have been with the class."

"Rosemary wanted awfully to try for it," observed Ned gravely.

"But she never did it, never, never!" cried Jan fiercely.

"But, you see, Jan, it's different with Rosemary," Ned returned thoughtfully. "She's a poet's daughter, and anyhow is different from everyone else. And in this case, it wasn't the prize she really wanted, but the money. Rosemary isn't keen about going to college, but Mr. Anstruther means that she shall go. But he's only her step-father, and he's paid out so much on the bad debts her father left that he never has been able to fix up the old Anstruther estate as he wanted to, and if he sends her to college, he'll have to put it off still longer."

"And yet, Ned, you don't really believe Rosemary did it?" Jan pleaded with tears in her eyes.

"She must have told Mr. Anstruther that she did it," he said firmly.

"But couldn't she have been shielding someone else?" Jan cried eagerly.

"Well, who, for instance, Jan?"

"I don't know. Someone that wanted the prize just terribly."

"Nobody appeared very keen for it to-day."

"I wanted it myself like everything once," Jan owned. "I'd give up anything for such a brick as

Mr. Anstruther ; but I wanted the prize like sixty until—all this happened. I haven't cared since."

"Well, you're hardly the one Rosemary is shielding," Charley observed quaintly.

"O, I wish I were!" cried Jan. "Honestly, I wish with all my heart that I *had* done it. You know, as a matter of fact, I was so mad the very night that it happened that I could have committed murder. Why didn't I do that instead? Listen, boys, I'd just like to pretend that I did! I'd just like to go to Mr. Anstruther and say 'twas me and not Rosemary. If I thought there was any chance of putting it over with him! Dad's got money to burn, and I ought never to have wanted the old prize, but—wouldn't it be grand if I could do that, and Rosemary could get the prize?"

Her eyes shone with generous ardor; warm color flushed her brown cheeks. Charley gazed at her admiringly, and in almost dazed fashion. But Ned frowned sternly.

"Well, it's too late now, Jan," he said grimly, "and thank goodness it is!"

CHAPTER XXIII

IT happened that on the very day when friendly relations between Rosemary and the January girl were broken off, her step-father had been remarking to his wife upon the benefit to Rosemary of this new and surprising intimacy. And he continued to feel great satisfaction over it long after it ceased to exist. Indeed, he wasn't aware of any rupture in the friendship until after the holidays, when he suddenly discovered, one day, that the girls weren't even speaking to one another. It was enough, he declared to Mrs. Anstruther, to cause a man's hair to turn gray overnight. His hair, however, being of that ugly, sandy hue that holds its color longest of any, underwent no alteration.

He seized his first opportunity to speak to his step-daughter.

"Rosemary, is it possible that something has come between you and Janice?" he inquired with kindly sympathy. "I was tremendously gratified to see you apparently becoming good friends. But now——"

Rosemary confessed that something had come between them.

"I wish you felt like telling me what it is, my dear," he said.

Tears came to the girl's eyes. She looked up through them.

"I would if I could, truly, daddy; it would be a great—comfort," she faltered. "But if you knew, you would say I ought not."

As to that, he didn't at all agree with her, but there was nothing to be said, Rosemary having made up her mind such was the fact.

"Well, I'm sorry if you feel that you can't," he said. "If you change your mind, come to me at any time. It might be, you know, that we could straighten it out together. Meantime—O Rosemary, I hope you have considered this thoughtfully? You must know that you are very likely to see only one side of a subject. It's a great pity to let anything indifferent interrupt what bade fair to be a true friendship. And you know, my dear, there are few finer things to be gotten out of life than the friendships of youth. Later on, come love and marriage and work and experience more or less varied and deep; but to none of these, I believe, there goes more of purity, generosity and idealism than to the intimate friendships between schoolmates. In any event, no after experience will find one so well prepared, nor, consequently, will mean so much to one who has lacked this fine and essential element of youth."

To the depths of her heart, Rosemary felt the truth of what he said. As it came to her how deeply the words would have thrilled Jan, also, she clasped her hands in pain.

"Thank you, daddy," she said, her dark eyes full of haunting and baffled longing.

"Will you think it over again very thoughtfully, Rosemary, and try to see if there isn't some way out?" he urged.

"I'll try my very best," she said.

He sighed. He seemed convinced beforehand that her effort would come to naught.

"Rosemary, you felt it last summer," he said earnestly, "when the people came back for Old Home day, —the beauty and value and permanence of the associations and relations of youth and school days? Now I can't help feeling that you aren't storing up that sort of thing as you should be; and I can't help fearing lest you discover—perhaps too late—what a lonely sort of poverty you have in place of it. You don't, I know, child, take naturally to your fellow human beings, though it isn't wholly nor perhaps largely your fault. I don't believe you ever felt any real warmth towards anyone in school until you began to care for Janice. I think you must have been drawn towards her almost from the first, but you allowed, and perhaps encouraged or forced a foolish fastidiousness and sense of superiority to keep you apart. When something or other brought you together, however, you found, I gather, that you took to Janice as you never had taken to any other person of your own age. In many ways, I confess, Rosemary, I don't understand you at all, but I think I know you well enough to understand that you found in Janice a companion who satisfied many

wants of your nature,—some, perhaps, that you hadn't before even been aware of. Am I right?"

She acknowledged sadly that he was.

"Then, don't, I pray you, let any trivial thing, or even any middle-sized thing, come between you," he urged. "After all, you know, it isn't always likeness of thought and ways that attracts us to another. Very often it's difference. And do remember, dear, that we're all very fallible in our judgments."

As he had apprehended, nothing tangible came of this interview. And presently Anstruther saw that Rosemary was looking very badly. Her mother thought it was the affair of the geometry class; he believed it due to the trouble between the girl and Janice January. But whatever it was, something had to be done.

He pondered over the matter for some little time. Then something he had had vaguely in mind through the year crystallized into a suggestion. One evening he handed the girl a little volume in scarlet leather with gilt edges—an anthology of English lyrics.

"Perhaps you may be able to get a bit of comfort and strength out of these, Rosemary," he said gently. "Read them and learn those that appeal to you especially, and then perhaps some day you may feel like trying to see what you can do yourself. Have you ever tried to write any verse?"

Her white face was flooded with color.

"Once, a long while ago," she owned.

He seemed to understand that it had been during

her father's lifetime, and that her over-sensitiveness and devotion to him had somehow forbade her to continue.

"Well, try again now," he counselled her. "Let some of these measures sing themselves into your consciousness, and then fit your own thoughts to them."

Thereafter she was continually poring over the little book. The poems seemed to sustain, if not to comfort her, and for a little her step-father was relieved of anxiety—until her lessons at school began to deteriorate. The process was not gradual; the change fell in a night, as it were. An unusually good scholar in everything except mathematics, and always a faithful student, the contrast between the girl's recitations up to the time the school-master became aware of the change and afterwards was at once striking and startling. At first the latter thought Rosemary must be far from well; then he began to wonder. He didn't venture to distress her by speaking to her at school; so he brought up the matter one evening at home after the younger children were in bed.

"Rosemary, I am sorry, but I must talk with you about your school work," he said. "I am in a sort of quandary about it. If I talk to you at school, I lose my patience and everybody thinks that I'm a bear, and if I scold you at home your mother thinks I'm one."

"Nonsense, Thad, you know perfectly well that I think whatever you do is just right," retorted Mrs. Anstruther. "If you want to scold Rosemary, I'm sure she deserves it, only isn't it rather late to begin

at nine o'clock? And besides, you've always said Rosemary was such a good girl at school and got all her lessons perfectly except mathematics,—and you know the child can't help their being hard for her."

He turned smilingly to Rosemary. "You don't deserve such an advocate, do you?" he demanded. "Now, seriously, Rosemary, what is the matter? It's not only your geometry: you failed in everything to-day; and yesterday and the day before were nearly as bad. Is it because you're not well?"

The dreamy look in the girl's eyes gave place to deprecation, and her lips set themselves in a sort of sad patience. She shook her head.

"Perhaps you can't keep your mind on anything?" he suggested, but again she shook her head. Her mother was about to urge her to speak out, but at this point little Em'ly was heard calling "Father," and she went up to her instead.

"Then, Rosemary, why is it that you don't get your lessons as you have always done before?" he asked gravely.

The girl couldn't answer.

"Have you suddenly lost your interest?" he persisted. Then his face lighted up as a suggestion came to him. "O Rosemary, it isn't that you have become so deeply absorbed in the poems that nothing else seems worth while?" he inquired with restrained eagerness.

She looked down at the little red book that was already worn from much handling.

"No, daddy," she replied with the same gentle patience which struck him as being, under the circumstances, rather a travesty.

And again he said to himself that she was the most perplexing, the most vexatious problem that he had ever endeavored to solve. If only she would be frank and open! Again and again, the event had proved her a sad bungler and blunderer; nevertheless she continued along the same lines, deciding upon impulse, clinging to her decisions with a tenacity that gave her an intolerable air of self-righteousness, and steadily refusing to explain. And over against all this was not only her beautiful face,—the loveliest he had ever looked upon—and her uncommon grace, but also an appealing sweetness of nature, an intensity of feeling, and even a strain of genuine humility.

"Rosemary, when you refuse to explain conduct that demands explanation, the natural inference is that you're simply trying to test my patience—to see how far you can go. Do you want me to believe that you're trying to be as hateful as you can?" he demanded rather fiercely.

"O daddy!" she cried very reproachfully.

"Well, I shall think so unless you explain," he said crossly. "Why don't you play fair, Rosemary?"

"I can't," she said sadly.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, have your own way. At least, however, you can promise to do better."

She sighed. Her eyes were on her thin hands as she nervously plaited the skirt of her blouse.

"I'll promise to do a *little* better," she said, and he had to laugh out.

"Awfully good of your royal highness to vouch-safe so much, I'm sure," he said. "But isn't such condescension rather too much,—actually to agree to do a *little* better,—when you couldn't do worse?"

She half smiled in vague reproach.

"You'll have to do a lot better in order to pass your examinations for college," he declared.

"I'm not going to college," she retorted warmly.

"Well, I like that," he said. "What do you mean, Rosemary?"

"I can't—try for the prize and I—don't want to go," she said without raising her eyes.

"Rosemary Greenaway! do you know that's a very unworthy feeling?" he exclaimed. "When you say things like that I sometimes wonder if you really aren't as naughty a girl as your actions would indicate. Usually, I make allowance for a good-sized capacity for blundering. Losing the prize was nothing in itself,—the pity was—whatever the motive—in committing the act that put you out of the running. Very likely you wouldn't have won it anyhow. Janice's chance was better because her mathematics are so good. Secretly, I hoped that you wouldn't get it. I didn't at all relish the idea of the school-master's daughter carrying it off; and besides, I want the satisfaction of educating all you children. And I know

well enough that the fact that I couldn't do it so handsomely as the prize provides for wouldn't trouble you in the least."

Rosemary couldn't speak. It was all that she could do to keep from crying. As her mother entered the room she went to her and threw her arms impulsively about her.

"Mother, won't you please tell daddy that I don't want to go to college?" she entreated.

Mrs. Anstruther understood perfectly why Rosemary didn't want to go to college, and now on a sudden she understood also the reason for her poor work at school,—the girl wanted to put herself on the safe side by making it impossible for herself to pass the entrance examinations.

"Emily, will you please tell Rosemary that she's going to college whether she wants to or not," Anstruther said firmly. "You might add that she wanted to go until very recently, and that she will not be allowed to flop about mentally in that unhealthy fashion. And tell her further that if she doesn't do better at school, something dire will happen to her."

Her mother had guessed right. The secret of her poor recitations at school was just that. But the girl wouldn't give over. Dismayed at the failure of this plan, Rosemary immediately made another which was yet more foolish. She was determined that she would not have all that money paid out for her. She acknowledged that she couldn't go on failing daily; neither could she, on the contrary, afford to get a

weekly average that would excuse her from the monthly examinations. In this dilemma, it struck her presently, as a good means of accomplishing her end, to go on as she always had done for four days a week and then to fail in everything on the fifth. That, with the inevitably frequent failures in geometry, ought effectually to disqualify her.

Whereupon the absurd girl proceeded to carry through this absurd program conscientiously. For four days she had almost perfect lessons. On the fifth, she failed in everything,—failed in such clear-cut, deliberate, cold-blooded fashion that others besides the school-master were amazed, and he was astounded.

Just before school closed, as he saw her gazing idly out the window, he set his lips firmly.

“Rosemary Greenaway, will you move all your books down to this front seat and occupy it until further notice?” he demanded. “There’s no reason why you shouldn’t get your lessons if you study, and if I have you right under my eye I will see that you do. And bring your geology and your Virgil home to-night and I will help you make up to-day’s lessons. I am extremely mortified and ashamed to have one of my seniors make such wretched failures.”

Pale and frightened, Rosemary made the change, and, school being dismissed, stole home and sat by her window in stony agony. She dreaded the evening so that she scarcely touched her supper. Her father came in late, apparently greatly perturbed, and her dis-

tress became cold fear. He couldn't eat, either, and presently excused himself, asking Rosemary to come to him in the study as soon as she was through. She followed him with beating heart.

He began the moment she was seated.

"Rosemary, I must tell you this," he said. "Janice January came to me after school and said that it was she who—cheated—that she consulted the key to the originals in geometry."

For a moment Rosemary simply stared at him, white as a ghost. Then she wrung her hands.

"O father, why did she tell you! What was the use *now?*" she cried. "O, I wouldn't have had her tell for the world! Jan's so—*splendid*—all but that. And I'd far rather people would think it was me forever and ever!"

She dropped her head on the arm of the chair and wept.

Then it was true! Anstruther was amazed. He hadn't at all believed Janice. Even now it seemed absolutely incredible. But Rosemary's behavior established it as a fact.

"You knew that she did it, Rosemary, and that was why you took it upon yourself?" he asked gently.

She raised her head.

"No, daddy, it wasn't quite that," she said sorrowfully. "I saw her, and so I had to say that I did know something about it. And then, as she was the only one that had the example that way, if I had said it wasn't me, it would have been like telling tales of

her. That was why I did it at first. Afterwards, I was glad because—I loved her. And, father, I still do. Won't you please, please not tell anyone else? Just let it be a secret between us. It's punishment enough for her, your knowing it. But it seems as if I couldn't bear to have you tell the class that it was Jan. Honestly, I would ever and ever so much rather go on letting people think it was me. I'm so used to it, I hardly mind it now. I believe—I believe I really *like* it. O daddy, won't you please not tell?"

CHAPTER XXIV

UPWARDS of a year after she had entered Greenwich Town Academy, Janice January stood by the school-master's desk one afternoon at recess. Tall and straight and handsome, with vitality and vivacity apparent in every feature and even in her mass of chestnut hair, as he looked upon the girl's open countenance and noted the fine brow, the large, humorous mouth, the clear bright eyes full of intelligence, it would have seemed to the school-master that Janice January was the soul of honor. If Rosemary hadn't confirmed her statement, if she hadn't actually seen Janice commit the act, he never could have believed it.

"I just wanted to say something, Mr. Anstruther," the girl faltered. "I—well, you understand all that—but I've taken my punishment and I'll go on taking it without a word, for it's a sort of continued-in-our-next affair. And I'm trying to be good now, to do exactly right, and I'll go on trying. Only—I just hope that sometime you will—be like you used to be. You seem now as if you'd never trust me again."

Jan bit her lips, but raised her eyes bravely.

"I mean to be the same as ever to you, Miss January," he returned with cool kindness. Out of school hours Mr. Anstruther called the scholars by their first

name, but as this was recess, Jan thought he might have forgotten.

"But you aren't," she protested. "I mean, it seems to me almost as if you weren't. Probably you ought not to be. Only—I don't care how severe the punishment is, if only——"

"Janice, I don't like that attitude," he said gravely. "You seem to have a notion that you can do wrong and then get quite clear of it simply by taking the punishment. You view it altogether too lightly. As your teacher, I try to treat you as if nothing had happened; but I can't help feeling greatly disappointed in you. In a certain sense, the same thing seems worse in you than it seemed in Rosemary when I believed she did it. Rosemary is extremely immature and a sad blunderer, and can do wrong more innocently, so to speak, than anyone I ever knew. But you, Janice, are mature. You see things straight and with extraordinary clarity for a girl of your years. You are impulsive, I know, and mischievous. I don't at all doubt that you did it in hot blood. But you must, even so, have known that it was wrong even as you did it, and afterwards—— What in the world possessed you, anyhow?"

Jan's eyes fell. "I was awfully mad that night," she said in a low voice. "I heard something somebody said about me, and it made me so perfectly furious that I hated everybody, even you, Mr. Anstruther. And then——"

The bell rang at that moment. Jan went wearily

to her seat. She had no recitation that period and sat with her eyes fixed upon her open book without seeing a word.

It wasn't only that her heart ached. But Mr. Anstruther's words had made her feel remorseful, as if she were actually guilty. She didn't know how she was ever going to endure it,—weeks and weeks like this—yes, forever, so long as she should live. She had never dreamed of its being so agonizingly hard. Would she have done it if she had?

She glanced towards Rosemary, who sat in her old seat studying hard in her grave, sweet, dutiful fashion, and said to herself that if she had it to do over, she would do exactly the same, except that she would have done it earlier and saved Rosemary that much the more. It had actually made a great difference to Rosemary. She wasn't nearly so sad. She was working again for the prize, and seemed almost happy in doing so. She had been very sweet to Jan, too, though in a vague way. There had been a sort of reconciliation between them, though reconciliation without explanation or assurance is, after all, rather a stiff thing. Moreover, Jan felt it to be better that they should keep apart, for she didn't mean to allow Rosemary to protest against what she had taken upon herself. She said to herself wistfully that perhaps, after graduation, after Rosemary had won the prize and all was over, they might be friends again truly.

As she went home that night, Ned Mitchell overtook her. He had seen her talking with the school-

master at recess and had understood the look upon her face afterwards.

"O Jan, you ought never to have done that fool thing!" he said crossly. "It was simply crazy of you to do it. Rosemary didn't mind it half so much as you, and besides, she——"

"I don't care! Rosemary may not have showed it so much, but she took it harder. She isn't so strong," said Jan stoutly.

"Never mind that. It wasn't so bad for her, anyhow. Nobody blamed her because she's different, and—a poet's daughter and all that. Even Mr. Anstruther didn't seem to think it was so dreadful in her, but he's fierce at you, Jan. And everybody thinks it's worse in you, and besides they think you let her bear the blame all that time—all but Charley and me."

"And you two have sworn solemnly never in this world to breathe a word about it," she warned him. "And, O Ned, if only you wouldn't speak about it, even to each other. Now that it's done, you see as well as I that it must never be found out. You do, don't you?"

"O, I suppose so," he grumbled, "unless Rosemary says something."

Jan paled. She was thankful beyond words that Rosemary hadn't said anything, but she didn't like Ned to call attention to the fact.

"I'm scared blue about Charley, and that's a fact," she went on hastily. "He wouldn't mean to let it out, but you know, Ned, he is such an easy mark."

"It isn't Charley's fault. His family have always made a baby of him. To this day he sort of—well, *prattles* to his mother."

"Good heavens! If he prattles my secret to her, I'll kill him," cried Jan. "O my goodness me! if only when the idea came to me I'd had the sense to hold my tongue! Or if Charley hadn't caught on, or hadn't been there. Ned, do help me out."

"I'll do what I can," Ned agreed soberly. "I'll hammer it into his head to keep it dark, but I can't promise it won't leak out. He talks in his sleep, you know—or thinks he does. I shouldn't wonder if he was sort of scared of the dark, and his mother goes to him and he tells her what's on his mind."

Jan groaned. "Isn't that the limit!" she exclaimed. They stopped at her gate.

"Rosemary's afraid to go home in the dark, too," she said with an attempt at lightness. "Funny, isn't it, and she doesn't know what it is at all that she's afraid of. But it only seems sweet of her, somehow, like everything about her does, her name and all. And it makes you feel so sort of comfy and happy to go along with her, as if you were protecting her, and wishing all the time it were dangerous, really. Doesn't it, Ned?"

"Sure, Jan," he said and departed hastily.

Jan had a hard night and never once thought of her geometry lesson until the class was called the first thing in the morning. She hadn't looked at either of the two originals assigned, and her heart sank when

she was asked to go to the board first of all to demonstrate the harder of them. She had promised Mr. Anstruther only yesterday to do her best, and now when she refused he would think she was sulky and hateful.

She couldn't bear to say that she was unprepared. She went to the blackboard and constructed the diagram. As she drew it with great deliberation, her quick mind grasped the first step to be taken. She started in. The problem was exceedingly difficult and complex. She hesitated, but only for a moment. Then she went through it, not with her usual swing, but very slowly, step by step, yet without an error. As she resumed her seat, feeling rather weak after what had really been a tremendous effort, the school-master glanced at her wonderingly. He had understood that her demonstration was impromptu, and he marveled both at the keenness of her mind and at her control of it. But possibly less flattering reflections accompanied these, for he said nothing. And remembering other occasions, the girl's heart was sore.

Presently she was aroused from her fit of abstraction by hearing Mr. Anstruther say something pleasant to Charley Clement. She gathered that Charley had asked an especially intelligent question. As she noticed the reaction upon the boy, a suggestion flashed across her mind, and the rest of the lesson was a blank to her.

Some time since, Mr. Anstruther had announced that the seniors might study together all they cared to,

prize or no prize; and that afternoon she asked Charley to come in after supper and study for the test in history the class was to have next day.

They had a pleasant, even exciting evening, putting questions to each other and discussing people and events that came up. Jan kept Charley laughing a good part of the time by her lively and often impertinent remarks upon famous characters, but she made everyone seem alive. Charley went home in the best of spirits and wrote a perfect paper next day.

Thereafter the two studied together three or four nights a week, Ned joining them frequently. Jan's purpose wasn't disinterested; she had resolved to keep Charley so busily and happily employed that his thoughts wouldn't dwell morbidly upon her secret, and he would neither lie awake at night nor talk in his sleep. Whatever her motive, however, she gave herself, as always, wholly and warmly, and the result was wonderfully good for Charley. The boy seemed suddenly to wake up, to throw off a certain effeminacy which was less attractive as he grew older, and to become a manly youth. His mind was good, and, once aroused, became keen. His interest in his studies so increased that his recitations began to astonish his classmates and the school-master alike. His marks were so high that his mother began to worry lest he should have brain fever. He ate and slept well, it was true, but she felt such steady application to his books was dangerous, and finally she went to the school-master to ask if he would advise her taking

Charley out of school for the rest of the year, reminding him that he was the youngest in the class and delicately constituted. But Mr. Anstruther reassured her in his kindly way, and Charley continued to do remarkable work.

Jan was delighted that her scheme worked so well, and began to take a sort of proprietary pride in Charley. But she didn't really understand how much else she had accomplished. Ned Mitchell had heretofore been first among the boys in the class and near the top, and had unconsciously rather looked down on Charley intellectually. Now when he recovered from his amazement to find that Charley had not only overtaken but outstripped him, he began making strenuous efforts to restore the *status quo*. Whereupon Charley was spurred on to yet greater energy. And meantime, the rest of the class felt the impetus. Jan was always among the first, and being debarred from the prize made no difference in her work. Rosemary, again in the running, did better than ever before. Jane Clement, who had always done well, better always than Charley, now, being left behind by her younger brother, had to look to her laurels. The others, all above the average, began to climb well above it in the cheerful and exciting spirit of rivalry that prevailed.

But two in the class were neither cheerful nor excited. Even in the deepest study, Rosemary never wholly forgot her melancholy. The relief of feeling that her secret was safe meant much, indeed, to Jan,

but her heart was heavy. She couldn't understand Rosemary,—couldn't understand her action at this time any more than at the time she had written that strange note that had ended their friendship. And yet she cared for her only the more deeply as the days passed, and yearned towards her more wistfully. She tried to bear up, but she was so unhappy that she supposed everyone thought she was thinking of what she had done and dying of remorse.

As a matter of fact, however, no one thought any such thing. For though Jan was thin and hadn't so much color as she had had, she didn't seem to have lost her high spirits. She held up her head and laughed and jested and kept everything lively as of old. And while some of the girls rather wondered, most of them accepted her as she was. And the boys, even those who didn't understand, meant a great deal when they pronounced Jan a good sport.

From the beginning, Jan's one personal anxiety had been lest her sister should learn of what had happened. She couldn't face the thought of Enid's knowing that she had been accused, yes, convicted of dishonesty. She dreaded the effect such knowledge might have upon the timid, shrinking child who had known no mothering except hers and Libby's, and no moral training but hers. Shortly after she had spoken to Mr. Anstruther, she went to her father.

"Dad, I suppose some guy has put you wise about what's up at school?" she asked abruptly.

"Sure, Jan," he said so coolly that his daughter

frowned. She was aware that he would never believe anything discreditable of her, but she didn't dream that he had heard her idle remark to the boys which had engendered her resolution to put it into action. Tom January knew what Jan was doing and thought it splendid of her; and though, as her face grew thin and white and wore a new wistfulness, he felt troubled, he held his peace. For he felt that his daughter was far more capable of interfering in his affairs than he in hers.

"Of course," he added at this time, "I make my own deductions, old girl."

"Well, you needn't," she retorted, "and I don't want any more of your impudence now, only——"

She put her arms about his neck. She was nearly as tall as he and more erect.

"Dad, I don't want Enid to know," she said softly. "You'll help me keep it from her, won't you, old top?"

He hugged her warmly and kissed her white forehead between the lines of her hair. And Jan felt strengthened and comforted.

The days went by, and the talk died out, and when weeks had passed and Enid had heard nothing, Jan believed she was safe. Enid's one friend and inseparable companion was Jack Greenaway, and that fact protected her. And if ever there had been any talk about the affair at the academy in the lower schools, it must have died out by now. Jan breathed freely again.

CHAPTER XXV

ONE day in the early spring, Janice saw Libby slip a package into Enid's hand, as the little girl went to the gate to join Jack Greenaway on the way to school.

"What's up, Libby?" she asked anxiously. "Isn't Enid all right? Wasn't that a lunch you gave her?"

"Yes, that was a bit of lunch, honey, but don't you go worry. Enid's peart 'nuf, only she didn't eat no dinner," Libby returned soothingly. "I reckon she's got excited, some way."

"But what's she excited over?" Jan demanded. "Libby, you don't suppose Jack Greenaway's up to mischief again, do you?"

"No, honey. It ain't that sort of excitement. Enid won't tell me nothin' but I 'spect somethin' at school grieved her. Maybe teacher licked a naughty boy. Enid can't bear to see anybody hurted the least in the world."

"You think whatever it was happened this morning?"

"I shouldn't wonder it was yesterday, Jan, dearie," Libby returned deprecatingly. "Enid—she cried last night, you see. Pore little lamb, I 'spect after I up and left her she cried herself to sleep."

Jan turned abruptly and flew to the attic. For a little she walked up and down, her hands clasped tightly, trying to keep back her tears.

Had Enid heard? she asked herself. It couldn't be, after all this time. Why, everyone had forgotten—almost everyone. Jan herself hadn't, of course, nor Mr. Anstruther, nor Rosemary. But no one else seemed ever to think of it. It was surprising how such a thing should have passed from the minds of even her classmates, as it seemed to have done. There was no shade of difference in their attitude towards her since the day Mr. Anstruther had announced that she was debarred from the prize. And certainly if it wasn't spoken of among the academy pupils, it wasn't mentioned in the lower schools.

No, it wasn't that. It was rather, just as Libby had said, that something which had happened at school weighed on Enid's tender heart. Jan said to herself she would talk to Enid directly after school, get it out of her, and comfort her.

That reminded her suddenly of her own school. Rushing downstairs, and looking at the clock, she was alarmed to see how late it was. But if she ran all the way, she thought she might reach the academy in time.

She started pell mell down the avenue. Then suddenly she remembered Libby. Faithful Libby would understand her rushing up to the garret, and she would grieve all afternoon over her trouble. Jan turned and rushed back.

She threw her arms about Libby and kissed her, and explained that she was all right now and meant to speak to Enid right after school and cheer her up. Then she flew away again.

She heard the academy bell ring before she was nearly half way, but she continued running, more from excitement than any sense of duty. The violent exercise which flushed her cheeks, brightened her eyes and made her look her veritable old self, made the January girl forget everything for the nonce and actually be her former self. As she whisked breezily across the floor, five minutes after everyone else had settled down to work, she created a mild sensation.

Now it was Rosemary who gazed at her with secret admiration and wistful longing. She asked herself how she could ever have regarded Jan except with admiration. And she wondered sadly and almost bitterly whether all would not be right now, if she hadn't been so blind—so proud and hard?

And she paled as she saw that the school-master was frowning darkly on Jan, and felt as if she ought to beg him to spare Jan because it was all her fault.

But the school-master never had any compassion for anyone who came in late.

"Have you an excuse for coming in at this hour and disturbing the whole school, Miss January?" he inquired sternly.

"No, sir," returned the old Jan promptly, "at least, I mean yes, sir." She shrugged her shoulders. "I

guess I don't know myself." And she laughed carelessly.

"When you make up your mind, you might let me know," he remarked dryly.

But the color faded from her cheeks and her bit of spirit flared out, as Jan's doubts concerning Enid's trouble flocked back. At recess she went to Jack Greenaway. It was as she had secretly feared: yesterday Enid had heard about—what had happened before Christmas at the academy.

After school, Jan waited a little in her seat until the others should have gone. For she must walk home alone in order to prepare herself for meeting Enid. Mr. Anstruther came and stood beside her.

"Has something gone wrong, Janice?" he asked very kindly.

"O, yes, Mr. Anstruther, and it's nearly killing me," the girl cried.

"Can I help you?" he asked. "Would you feel like telling me about it?"

"If you'd be willing to listen," she said humbly. And he signified his willingness by taking the seat opposite. Jan explained frankly.

"It's for her sake that I mind," she concluded. "You see I'm the only mother Enid has ever known, and she thinks——"

She looked at him pleadingly.

"Of course, Janice," he said warmly, "you stand to her for whatever is right and good."

"I've never tried to make her think more than that

I try to be good, but—there's never been anything like this. You see I can't—I don't know—what to say to her. Honestly, Mr. Anstruther, it seems as if I couldn't possibly go home and face that child."

The school-master didn't say any of the obvious things. He sat deep in thought for a few minutes. Then he spoke.

"How would you feel, Janice, if I should speak to Enid to-night?" he proposed. "She and I are very good friends, you know. I think as much of her as Jack does. I believe I could make it right with her,—get her to suspend judgment and put it out of her mind like other things children cannot understand. An older person can often accomplish things that way where a younger might fail. The mere authority of years counts for something."

Jan thanked him warmly, then retreated hastily. She never allowed anyone to see her shed tears. She restrained them until she reached home. Meeting Jack and Enid, she sent them to the Anstruthers' to wait for Mr. Anstruther. Then she fled to her refuge in the garret.

CHAPTER XXVI

IF human beings were in the habit of appraising and valuing their well-being as they go along, and if youth and school days be, indeed, as they tell us, the happiest portion of life, it might have seemed that the period just drawing to a close for the seniors at Greenwich Town academy must have been such a season of peculiar happiness, that the boys and girls, counting the days, would have longed to hold to the tail of each, bidding it linger in the old phrase, "O stay, thou art so sweet!" And truly the weeks between New Year's and Easter seemed to pass with a maximum of smoothness, swiftness and happiness. To an onlooker, the members of the class must have seemed models of deportment and scholarship with no concern for anything outside their education, and the school-master's only concern, lest they go so fast as to outstrip the curriculum.

In fact, Janice January, Charley Clement and Rosemary Greenaway had such lessons day after day that it sometimes seemed as if a mark higher than 100 would have to be adopted, while the others ranked so well as to have been prize pupils elsewhere. Furthermore, no one took advantage of the greater liberty commonly allowed seniors on the home stretch. No

one dreamed of risking a second slide on the long hill even when the coasting was perfect and a thaw imminent. Nothing happened that hadn't to do strictly with the business of school.

And yet that term was exceedingly dreary for everyone, and for some, hard beyond anything they had ever known. And as it drew to a close, everyone wondered how the strain of the coming and last term was to be endured.

Early in April, a cousin of the postmaster's who was a college professor in the Middle West, arrived in Greenwich Town to spend his holidays, which fell earlier than those of the academy. Professor Burns, whose chair was that of geology, had been a frequent visitor in the past, and knew the countryside thoroughly; and the school-master sought him eagerly soon after his arrival.

"I wish very much, Burns, you would take my senior class off for a ramble some afternoon, and tell 'em about rocks and fossils and what-not," he proposed. "You know, I feel as if something would happen if they don't have a bit of excitement before long. A good time out of doors, a real frolic, may prevent an earthquake."

"What's up now, Thad?" inquired the postmaster. "I thought everything was fine and dandy, as the boys say."

"It's that fool prize of Rod Whitney's, if you will know," grumbled the school-master. "Of all pernicious and mischievous institutions—well, it's taught me one

thing. Never again will there be such a thing in any school where I am teaching."

"Meaning, my dear boy, in Greenwich Town Academy," added the postmaster. "You know perfectly well that you can have things just as you want 'em. And you also know that you're bound to us forever."

After Anstruther had gone, the postmaster, who had been his classmate until the day both had been graduated from the academy, and who, like everyone else in Greenwich Town, considered him unique and perfect, told his cousin that Anstruther was constantly receiving offers from this college and that, but that the school committee would never let him go, even if he wished to do so,—which he didn't. They had raised his salary twice since he had been with them and were shortly to increase it to a point that would make it equal to that of many a college president.

"That prize business is curious, Cal," he went on to explain. "Rod Whitney's the South African millionaire, you know; he was our classmate here at the Greenwich Town schools. When he was on a year ago last summer for Old Home day, he got as wild over Thad as if he'd been a college boy. He just longed to pour out a pile of money on him, but he couldn't for the life of him make out to do it. He begged meekly to be allowed to educate the four children, who aren't Thad's own, for the sake of their father, who was also his and our classmate, but he wasn't allowed to do that. Then he thought he'd get round it by establishing a scholarship that would send

the best scholar of every graduating class through college. The Greenaway children are very bright, and he thought he'd catch 'em that way. The school committee put it up to the master, and he finally agreed to try it for one year. Well, you heard what he had to say about it!"

The following Friday afternoon was appointed for the walk with Professor Burns. The place decided upon was Sweet Auburn, a barren, rock-strewn and granite-ribbed hillside of glacial formation in a neighboring township, the summit of which had been the site of a village deserted so long since that the remains were well-nigh obliterated. Everyone in the class consented to go. Neither Rosemary nor Janice had any heart for such thing, but the school-master was eager for the best possible showing in return for Professor Burns's courtesy, and their compliance made the response unanimous. They were to go by an early afternoon train to a tiny flag station called Putnam's Crossing, whence a walk of a mile led to the meadow out of which the hill began to ascend. They were to carry lunches and return by the last train, which left the Crossing at half past six.

The day was like a summer day. Twenty-one boys and girls met Professor Burns at the Greenwich Town station to take the one o'clock train. They were disappointed not to find Mr. Anstruther there. He had felt it better not to accompany them and was to take his wife and Sally into the city for over night.

Those of the boys whose mothers had insisted upon

their carrying extra coats left them in the baggage room, and joined the others in relieving the girls of their wraps and baskets. Janice January started to leave her heavy white knitted wool jacket in the same place; but it occurred to her that possibly Rosemary might be chilly, and she took it along. She never ceased to have Rosemary foremost in her thoughts. She hadn't wanted to bring any lunch, but the chance of Rosemary's losing hers by accident had led her to let Libby put up an especially delicious one.

The journey was short. From the moment they stepped off the train at the absurd little box of a station, everything seemed ideal, except for the absence of Mr. Anstruther. The sky was as blue as ever it is on the coldest and clearest of winter days when recent snow has strained the air clean, and the clouds were so white and fleecy and compact that they seemed pictures of clouds on a painted sky. The frost was all out of the ground and the walking good. The trees were veiled only in pale fine green, but the grass was ankle deep in the meadows and by the roadside.

When they reached the hill, they scattered in little groups, Professor Burns being now with one, now with another. They rambled hither and thither in leisurely fashion, but met at length at the summit and together had their first glimpse of the wonderful panorama around and about them in awed silence.

Together, too, they went about tracing the homes of the deserted and vanished village by means of overgrown cellar holes, sentinel trees and lilac bushes. At

first they shouted in excited rivalry when one or another discovered what might be a clue, but presently something of the solitude and pathos of it all touched their young hearts and subdued their voices. And when, as the shadows lengthened in the plain below, they gathered again at the summit, and sat down in a circle upon the sun-steeped rocks to eat their luncheons, they were still rather serious as they discussed the two questions that naturally arose:—why a settlement should ever have been made upon this remote hillside whose rocky soil gave slight chance for cultivation; and wherefore, having been called into existence, the village had later been deserted.

There were, of course, many traditions though no facts. They discussed the former, adding many and various speculations of their own. And of course they wondered what Mr. Anstruther thought about it, and wished he were with them at the moment to tell them, even while they realized that their parents would feel thankful that he had gotten away from them for a holiday with his wife.

It was like him to have arranged this pleasure for them,—this peculiar pleasure in that it would mean much in retrospect. They would always remember it. And perhaps when they, too, should years hence come back to Greenwich Town, middle-aged men and women, to celebrate Old Home Day, they would recall this afternoon to one another, and ask if the others remembered this and that. And after the manner of youth they saw themselves at that time twenty-one

strong—and twenty-one successful and happy into the bargain!

They hoped, with a sigh, that at that time Mr. Anstruther wouldn't seem old. They didn't believe it would be possible for him ever to seem old, though the Clements' father said he had aged ten years since he came back to Greenwich Town and had been in charge of "you youngsters."

The shadows grew longer. The East was pink and the sun low in the West when Rosemary, who had been appointed spokesman, rose to thank Professor Burns for the pleasure he had given them. In his response, the professor was perfectly sincere as he expressed what it had meant to him. But he didn't say that he had never encountered such altogether charming and delightful and intelligent young people. They started upon the descent in good time to reach the station comfortably.

Now first the boys became really frisky and the girls grew more and more lively. They ran and scampered and raced and hid and jumped out upon one another, and, like so many puppies, quadrupled the distance they had to go. Then at the last moment they hung back so as to be obliged to make a mad dash for the train. Professor Burns and Charley had been there in season to have it flagged, and the boys and girls scrambled laughingly into one or other of the two rear coaches. And it never occurred to anyone to count heads.

Only faithful Jan, longing, as ever, to sit where she

could watch Rosemary and help or protect her in case of need, when she discovered that she wasn't in the foremost car went back into the other. To her amazement, Rosemary wasn't there. She went back into the first for a hasty glance, then returned and walked the length of the second. Rosemary wasn't on the train!

As she passed through the door, those who saw Jan supposed she was going into a further car. As a matter of fact, though the train was well started, she jumped from the rear platform to the track.

CHAPTER XXVII

ROSEMARY had lingered near the summit after the others had started to go down the hill, dropping down in the shelter of a great boulder to jot down some verses that had come to her as she had looked upon a pathetically worn door-stone. "The Lonely Threshold," she called the little poem, and it seemed to her that she was only a few moments transcribing it. She didn't doubt at all but that she could easily overtake the others in their round-about meandering by making her descent in as straight a line as the steep descent allowed. If necessary, she could run all the way across the soft grass of the meadow below, and along the lane itself.

But for a little she sauntered vaguely along, still in a dream of the feet that had worn the door-stone that was now desolate. But when on a sudden she came to a place where she supposed she ought to overlook the way to the station, she came fully to herself. She didn't see any lane nor any road, nor was there anyone in sight, nor any voices or murmur of voices to be heard. Looking back anxiously, the way seemed so dim that she feared the sun must have set, though the shoulder of the hill hid the horizon and she wasn't sure. It must be already very near train time!

Heading straight in the direction in which the station must lie, Rosemary made all haste. Paths and trails had been numerous as they came up, and she was vaguely troubled to come upon none now, but she didn't dare lose time by looking for them. Unconsciously she made a sidelong course as she ran, because of the pitch of the hill. Suddenly she found herself confronted by a stone wall!

She stared in bewilderment at it through the gathering dusk. They hadn't seen any such thing coming up, even at a distance! It seemed to extend indefinitely to right and to left. The darkening landscape chilled her with fright. She peered fearfully over the wall, which was flanked by two courses of barbed wire. The descent, which seemed sheer, was hidden by trees and undergrowth. Behind her all looked strange. She seemed to have walked into a trap, a labyrinth. She was shut in by trees on all sides on a hill where there had seemed to be no trees. And suddenly she didn't have the least idea where *below* was. She had utterly lost her bearings!

Fearfully, she skirted the wall for some little distance, hugging it as long as it seemed to follow a slope, for descend she must. But when it began to rise, she decided that she must cross it and venture into the unknown, though the dense growth beyond it was gloomy and terrifying in the twilight. As she was about to scale it, the girl remembered that there were swamps somewhere in this region. Suppose the wall and the barbed wire were a warning!

And then again, there might be cattle fenced in thus. A lion would not have been a more fearful object to Rosemary than was a cow, and that dread was worse than the thought of the swamp. But it must be nearly train time already, and there was nothing to do but to get down to the level, where she could run for it.

Resolutely, she climbed to the top of the wall, a more difficult procedure because of the barbed wire. The drop on the further side seemed considerable, but she could make out firm ground beneath and she slid over hurriedly.

As her feet touched the ground, the girl seemed to feel herself grasped rudely in a grip of iron from behind. Her heart seemed to stop. But after the first wild terror, it came to her that it was only her frock caught in barbed wire which must have lined this side of the wall also. Reckless of the fabric, she tried to tear herself violently away, but the stout twilled linen did not give by a single thread. Again and again she put forth her utmost strength, but she only seemed each time to be fastening herself the more tightly. She was held in the clutch of a dozen groups of the sharp barbs, and her struggles had so tightened it between the shoulders of her gown as nearly to choke her. She couldn't accomplish anything with her hands, and she couldn't get out of the frock because it buttoned in the back.

Had her feet not rested on the ground, her plight would have been dire indeed. As it was, it was sufficiently wretched. She was securely fastened to this

remote wall in the loneliest portion of a great, bleak, lonely hillside. She was a prisoner for the night, and as it would seem, forever. If it were a swamp below, the snakes could crawl up to her, and she couldn't run from them. If a cow should appear—but no,—it wouldn't matter that she couldn't run. For she would have died from fright!

CHAPTER XXVIII

WITH all her experience, Janice January had had no practise in jumping from a vehicle moving faster than a grocer's delivery sleigh, and she landed on one foot with a force that seemed to have snapped her ankle. Smothering the cry there was no one to hear, for a few seconds she crouched between the tracks, oblivious of all save her agony. But after a little, she rose and hobbled painfully to the platform of the station.

Dragging herself to a bench on one side the door, she dropped down upon it. When she had recovered from her faintness enough to realize that the ankle couldn't be broken since it had borne part of her weight, she sat up and went to work to make it as serviceable as possible. She bound the ankle, which was swelling rapidly, tightly about over her shoe with a large napkin of firm damask she took from her lunch basket. That eased the pain. Tying the sleeves of her jacket around her neck and letting it hang down her back, after two or three ineffectual starts, she set out to find Rosemary.

The pain was so severe as to induce dizziness, but twilight was near and Rosemary was afraid of the dark, and she couldn't lose a minute. She scanned the

landscape. Rosemary was nowhere in sight, nor was there any human being or any sign of life to be seen. There was no building except for the hermetically closed station. There was no chance of help from any quarter. It was up to her.

Bearing as lightly as possible on the injured member, Jan hobbled on until she came to a place where a shallow grove flanked the lane. Here she readily found a stout stick which aided progress materially. Even so, she moved only at a snail's pace, and once and again had to sit down and hold her ankle with both hands.

When she reached the base of the hill, though the twilight had nearly faded, it availed her while she scanned its surface rapidly. There seemed to be no human form within her vision. The boulders were distinct; there was little small growth and no trees except cedars which were unmistakable. Professor Burns had spoken of swamps lying far to the east, and, shuddering, Jan bore to the right. After a little she got down and crawled, expediting her ascent and relieving her ankle. To do this, she had to abandon her lunch basket. She took out a box of matches she had brought along in case they might want to build a fire, and buttoned them carefully into a pocket of her jacket.

Before she reached the summit, night had come on, dark and still and without the glimmer of a star. Jan had called continually but without an answering sound. Now, after prolonged shouting, she decided to ascend

no further. Striking one of the matches, she found it was nine o'clock. With sinking heart, she turned sharply in the direction of the swamp. Tired and anxious, her ankle aching dully, she forced herself over the uneven hummocks of ground.

Suddenly she saw a star. Others came out, slowly and dimly at first, then large and bright. Jan welcomed them for the light, but more for Rosemary's sake. At moments it seemed to her as if Rosemary would have died of fright already. Afraid to be out after dusk in the quiet streets of Greenwich Town, what might she not suffer in this wild, deserted spot in the blackness!

Again she called wildly. Suppose Rosemary were near, right at hand, and couldn't answer! Perhaps it was an accident that had made her lose her train! Perhaps she had fainted and lay unconscious. But perhaps that would, after all, be preferable to the terror of consciousness; for with the light of morning, the help that would surely follow the discovery of their absence would probably be in time to save her.

Pressing on, presently as she called she seemed to hear a muffled sound in the distance, which might be a response or might be only some animal murmuring in its sleep. Hastening in the direction whence it came, Jan encountered a stone wall which ran diagonally south towards the constellation Scorpion, a dark line in the starlight, shutting off a dark growth that probably bordered the swamp.

Calling once more, the response was a sobbing

human voice. And the "Jan!" that followed put new life into her, so that regardless of her ankle, she ran almost as fleetly as she had ever done. A few seconds, and then the girls were in one another's arms—or as nearly so as was possible under the circumstances. For Rosemary had somehow had presence of mind enough to warn the other girl to stop where she was and not attempt to get over the wall.

CHAPTER XXIX

JAN kissed Rosemary, then withdrew to light a match and consider the situation. Before the light went out, she saw the plan of the wire, and throwing her jacket down got herself over the wall safely. She had also had a glimpse of Rosemary's white face. But she was unaware of the look of relief that came upon it as the glow revealed the eager, anxious, loving expression of her own face.

"Isn't it the luckiest thing that ever happened that I've got my jack-knife and these matches, Rosemary?" she cried. "But I mustn't waste 'em. I must husband them, mustn't I, like old What-you-call-um?"

She found she could not use her knife and hold a lighted match at the same time. For some moments she made no progress and burned a great many matches. Finally, deciding that she dared not use the knife in the darkness, she managed to squeeze her hands between the wall and the imprisoned girl, and endeavored to free her thus from the prongs. She lacerated her hands terribly, but that was nothing in comparison with the consciousness that she was hurting Rosemary, who winced now and again though she did not utter a sound.

She worked desperately and silently. After some

time she had released Rosemary's long braid and flung it over her shoulder. A few minutes more, and one side of her frock was free with the exception of one group of barbs from which she could not force the linen. She laid a gentle hand upon Rosemary's shoulder.

"Now, honey, don't let any weight come on this side for a few seconds.. Scrooge away with this shoulder if you can, even if you have to lean harder with the other and nearly kill yourself."

She opened her knife, lighted a match and gathered the material together with her hand where it would shield Rosemary. The match went out and she cut the stuff neatly and quickly. Then with her arm as a bar between Rosemary and the wall, lest she fall back and entangle herself anew, she pressed her hand through until she felt the buttons, and slowly and painfully unfastened the frock from neck to waist.

As she loosed the last button, Jan gave a little cry of triumph. But even then Rosemary was not free. The girl was too stiff and sore to do the necessary wriggling to get out of the frock, and Jan could not direct her movements in the darkness. For a few seconds, it seemed as if everything thus far had been done in vain. Rosemary would fall back and be fast again, and all would have to be done over. As Jan contemplated working at the other side of the frock, a suggestion came to her.

"I've got it now!" she cried eagerly. "Now, Rosemary, I've got to take my arm away and for just a

few seconds you must keep that side away from the wall."

Jan wore a skirt of heavy corduroy with her white blouse. Slipping the former off, she folded it double twice and placed it between Rosemary and the wall as a shield. Then she lighted a match and found the placket of Rosemary's skirt. Slitting it a few inches with her knife, she tore it from waist to hem and cut the hem. Then she swiftly ripped the frock from Rosemary and took the trembling girl into her arms.

Sobbing wildly, Rosemary clung to her. Jan held her close a few seconds. Then she asked her to hold a lighted match for her while she got the frock away from the wall.

Rosemary hadn't the strength to light a match, nor to hold the one Jan lighted and put into her hand. Indeed, she sank to the ground powerless. Jan tore the frock away ruthlessly, and managed somehow to get Rosemary into it, fastening the skirt where she had cut it with a long brooch she had in her tie. Then both girls dropped to the ground and sat there silent and almost breathless, Jan supporting Rosemary, whose face was buried in her shoulder, and who wasn't able to control her trembling and sobbing for some time. Sharp pains were shooting from Jan's ankle and she was cold without her skirt, but she was scarcely conscious of her own discomfort.

She felt that Rosemary ought to move as soon as possible, however, and spoke gently. Rosemary made a great effort and raised her head.

"O Jan, where did you come from, and how did you know?" she cried. "I thought I should die to be alone all night—and perhaps forever until I died. And if anything had attacked me—O Jan, I couldn't even have moved! And I kept hearing terrible sounds. O Jan! Jan!" And again she sobbed wildly.

"Poor darling," murmured Jan with a gentle, reassuring hug. "But it's all over now. I saw you weren't on the train, and you'd better believe I wasn't going back to Greenwich Town without you. And so—but honey, we mustn't sit here one second longer. We can talk as we go. We must get up and down and over the wall and down again to the station. If anyone has missed us and comes to look for us, that's the first place they'd visit."

Consideration of the suggestion helped Rosemary control her sobbing. The realization that her mother and father and Sally—those who would have been sadly frightened at her absence—were out of town for the night gave her strength to exert herself. Auntie Put would be asleep in bed, as well as Jack and little Em'ly, and she wouldn't be missed. For once, her blundering wouldn't have troubled anyone except Jan,—dear, faithful Jan. With a great effort, she rose to her feet.

"O Jan,—your father? Will he be worried about you?" she asked anxiously.

For the moment, Jan couldn't speak. As she had risen with Rosemary, she had forgotten her ankle and had borne her full weight upon it in addition to a part of Rosemary's, and the agony made her faint and

dizzy. But she groped for the place where her skirt covered the wall and rested one hand against it, the other arm being still about Rosemary.

"What was that?" she murmured after a little. "O, dad? No, he won't be worried. I have stayed over night lots of times with other girls and not sent—O, I forgot, he isn't home. He's in New York. And Libby—she'd be dead from fright already if it were Enid, but she will take it for granted I'm all right. She's got a lot more confidence in me than she ought to have."

"No one could have too much, Jan," Rosemary assured her. "But what are you doing now?"

"Fixing my skirt so that we can get over the wall in comfort. You go first, Rosemary, and I'll come tumbling after."

Getting over was truly a clumsy performance in the case of both girls, but once they were on the further side of the wall, and they seemed out of the nightmare. Jan pulled her skirt away, put it on, groped for her jacket, and, reckoning from the North star, determined the approximate direction of the station, and taking Rosemary's arm again, started across the hill to a point where they should be out of underbrush and could begin the descent.

Once out of the shadow of the trees and bushes, the starlight seemed brilliant. Jan's ankle pained her severely, and, slowly as they walked, she limped so that she felt sure Rosemary would notice it. But Rosemary was so cramped and stiff and sore from

more than two hours spent in that rigid position in the dampness that she could scarcely move. Her step was almost as halting as Jan's, and she couldn't have walked faster than the slow pace that was agony to the other girl.

CHAPTER XXX

NEITHER spoke until just after they turned to the south and began to descend. Then as Jan spoke Rosemary realized that the faithful soul must have been thinking of Libby.

"O Rosemary!" she cried. "It comes to me that there's a train from the West that gets into Greenwich Town at three in the morning, a heavy through train. Dad came in on it when he came from Chicago. It must go through Putnam's Crossing, and if we can flag it and get home, why, if anyone should be worrying, we could save them a few hours."

At the suggestion, Rosemary endeavored to quicken her steps, but the effort was more evident than any result.

"Tired, honey?" Janice asked.

"I don't know, Jan. I'm so relieved—so happy. But I think I've forgotten how one walks," Rosemary returned with a sorry attempt at lightness.

Jan squeezed her hand.

"We needn't hurry. We got hours and hours yet, only—perhaps we'd better keep moving, no matter how slowly."

"But, O Jan, you are—aren't you limping?" Rosemary asked anxiously.

"Perhaps I am," said Jan coolly. "Anyhow, I'll get a stick and have a third leg." And securing another, she made rather ostentatious use of it the remainder of the way.

It seemed miles upon miles to the station, but finally they came in sight of it.

"O look, Rosemary, there's a light!" cried Jan. "We're all right for flagging the train. Hurrah!"

In a glass receptacle on a post of the porch, a railroad lantern had been placed, and the light shone out clearly.

There was no one about. The girls dragged themselves up the steps and dropped heavily upon the bench. Jan drew up her injured foot and the relief was so great that the remaining pain was inconsiderable. Now she asked how it had happened, and Rosemary explained.

"But, Jan," she cried, "how did it happen with *you*?"

"Just as I said. I saw you weren't on the train so I—got off. That's the whole story," said Jan.

"I never dreamed of being missed that way. I thought of everything else," said Rosemary. "Were you all in the same car?"

"No, honey, I looked in both."

"But how did you happen to do that?" cried Rosemary in amazement.

"Well, I sort of felt like being in the same car with you. It seemed—more comfy."

"O, Jan!"

"I always want to, Rosemary. I'm always thinking of you. I never go to sleep without——"

On a sudden Jan choked.

Rosemary put her arm about her neck and kissed her shyly. Neither girl could speak, and they sat in silence for some time. Jan threw her jacket over Rosemary, who had lost hers, and drew her head to her shoulders. After a little she realized almost with ecstasy that Rosemary had fallen asleep. As she watched her, she was almost unconscious of the pain, which had increased again when she lowered her foot.

At the end of half an hour Rosemary woke and sat up.

"Now, Jan," she said decidedly, the while she quaked with fear at the thought of being alone awake, "you put your head on my shoulder and I'll watch." But Jan declared that she wasn't sleepy.

"Then let's talk," said Rosemary. "Jan, I believe you only did that because you wanted me to have a better chance to get the prize. You put yourself out so that I could get it."

"Why, Rosemary, what do you mean?" cried Jan in bewilderment, but not so dazed as not to grasp the fact that Rosemary hadn't done it. "I didn't do it. I just told Mr. Anstruther so. You didn't think I did?"

"Why, Jan——" faltered Rosemary.

"But, Rosemary, surely you couldn't think that I did it?"

"It wasn't really and truly doing it if you did it for someone else," protested Rosemary.

"But, Rosemary, how could you? How could you think I did it?" cried Jan, quite forgetting that she had let herself be persuaded that Rosemary must have done it.

"I—I saw you, Jan," faltered Rosemary.

"Saw me! O, Rosemary, but you couldn't have! You must have dreamed it!" cried Jan in distress.

"Jan dearest, I couldn't have been dreaming," said Rosemary sorrowfully. "I saw you so plainly. You went to father's desk and got something, and then you brought it back and put it in again."

Jan stared at her.

"Was it in the middle of the night?" she asked blankly.

"No, it was after school," said Rosemary drearily.

"Then it must have been someone else. For I never did it. Never! I never went near that desk any night after school or—O yes, I did once. I went and looked into it to see if there was any chance of a sliding panel or mice or anything. But that was long afterwards. That was the night before I got that note from you, Rosemary."

Suddenly Rosemary's heart leaped. If she had mistaken on that occasion, wasn't there a chance that she had mistaken the first time?

CHAPTER XXXI

ROSEMARY spent all her spare time out of school at Jan's bedside. But after Jan was moved downstairs to the sofa in the living-room, Mr. Anstruther was her first caller. After he had expressed as much gratitude and appreciation as Jan could bear in regard to her rescue of Rosemary, they came to the matter that had kept everyone stirred up all winter.

"Now suppose you tell me just how it was, Janice," he suggested. "I got only the main fact from Rosemary in regard to you. She made her own blundering clear. If she hadn't gone to the desk and fooled with the book, nothing at all would have happened. That started the whole thing."

"Yes, and wasn't it the limit that she should have seen me really go to your desk another night and go all through it!" Jan exclaimed.

"Why, Janice, what do you mean?" he said in such a strange tone that she looked up in wonder.

"I was playing detective, Mr. Anstruther. I thought I would examine the inside of the desk for any evidences of foul play or——"

The expression upon his face arrested her.

"Why, Mr. Anstruther. What is it?" she faltered. "You don't—mind?"



Rosemary spent all her time out of school at Jan's bedside

"Why—no, Janice, I—It's of no consequence of course. It's all over now, and you were a real hero a week ago to-day——"

"Only?" she asked wistfully.

"Well, what you said surprised me, I confess, because it doesn't seem like you, Janice, to speak so coolly of going to your teacher's desk without permission or explanation,—whatever your motive might have been."

"My goodness! I never thought! It *was* perfectly awful!" she declared. "I'm so ashamed of myself! O Mr. Anstruther, I've never had anyone to help me about such things, and—I'm not—they don't seem to come to me naturally. I'm so sorry."

"It's all right, Janice; we'll never think of it again," he said very kindly. "I spoke of it because I am your teacher and deeply interested in having you loyal always to your good and honorable self. And now tell me about what misled Rosemary in the first place."

Jan sighed. "It was that day when I acted so bad in school, cutting up shines when your back was turned. Do you want me to tell you what I was doing?"

"Indeed I do not," he said so promptly that she had to laugh.

"Well, anyhow, I was awfully ashamed right after school, and sorry down to the tips of my toes. I felt as if I couldn't stand it until next day, and yet I was ashamed to look you in the face, and anyhow you rushed off to a meeting, so I couldn't. So when I got

home I wrote a note saying how sorry I was, and got Libby to give me all the Christmas roses—there were four—and I took those and the note back to school. Your bag was on the sliding shelf of your desk and I put it in the desk with the end sticking out a little and put the note and the posies on top of it where you'd find them when you got your books to take home. I took a lot of time, because I wanted to make sure about the Christmas roses not falling off down into the deep part of the desk, for I knew we had the only ones in town.

"Well, when I got home again, I found Enid had been crying. Little Em'ly had told her something Rosemary had said about me. I flew into about the very worst rage that ever was. I felt as if I hated Rosemary and you and all your family. And I simply raced back again to the academy so as to get the note and the flowers away before you found them. I tore the note into tiny bits and buried the posies in a little patch of snow in the corner of the yard. But that sort of sobered me. Christmas roses are so rare,—and so sweet. And after Enid was in bed I cried for hours."

She drew a deep sigh. "Well, if I hadn't behaved so, nothing would have happened either. So it really goes back to me."

"It was certainly all a very strange train of circumstances," he observed. "I do not doubt but that when I have had a chance to contemplate it, I shall be able to discover how I might have been wiser myself—

perhaps how I might have prevented all the trouble."

"O Mr. Anstruther, if you go and do any such thing, I'm sure I don't know what will happen to me!" Jan cried. "I feel as if I should break the other ankle straight off."

He smiled.

"In any event, it's all over, and we cannot, any of us, be too thankful that it has all come out at last, and without leaving a stain upon anyone. It has been a hard experience for all of us, though harder for some than for others. But perhaps we shall all be the better for it—and the better friends."

Rising, he took her hand.

"It will be very good to have you back at school after the holidays," he said warmly. "We have missed you sadly, Jan."

She grinned to hide the tears which his use of her nickname brought to her eyes, and answered his goodbye by a flippant "So long!" And then she had to give way to them as she saw him pick up Enid and put her on the gate post and stand talking with her in his kindly way.

When she returned to the academy after the holidays, Jan still limped. Indeed, she limped up to the platform at commencement, and all through the summer and into the autumn. Otherwise, she was, from the very first day, her old self in the best sense of the words. The reception she received was truly overwhelming. And though she had seen Rosemary every

day since the excursion, it seemed like a miracle to be back in school and to be dearer friends with Rosemary than she had ever dreamed of being, even in her first week at Greenwich Town. Everything made her happy, but perhaps nothing brought her the same exquisite joy as the class poem Rosemary had written.

On the Sunday after the class outing, Anstruther had inquired of Rosemary about the verses which had been the cause of her losing the train on that occasion. Rosemary had shyly brought them forth. "The Lonely Threshold" had surprised him exceedingly, as well as touching him and pleasing him profoundly; and he had begged and finally persuaded Rosemary to show him other verses she had written.

She fetched the collection, which amounted to fifteen short lyrical poems. Composed during the stress of the winter, they were melancholy and sorrowful, but they were not morbid. There was sweetness and melody in them, and each had a dominant intellectual idea. Her step-father found them full of promise. He told his wife in confidence that "The Lonely Threshold" was better than anything Roger Greenaway had ever written.

When Rosemary, in all seriousness, proposed to burn them, he asked to be allowed to lock them into a little drawer of his desk until she should have finished her first year at college, after which they would examine them again together. And meantime, he urged her to keep on writing.

Her class poem was really distinctive,—above the

average of such verse even in college. Jan told Rosemary that it almost made her burst with pride and joy to realize that the poet was her friend and was to be her roommate at college. And her step-father declared that if she had won twenty prizes, she wouldn't have gratified him one-twentieth so much.

For Rosemary didn't win the prize—nor yet, Janice. Charley Clement carried it off by reason of a remarkable record. And everyone was satisfied that it had so happened. It could not have fallen better, it was allowed. Striving for it and winning it had made a man of Charley. And when the school-master wrote to inform Rod Whitney, the bestower of the prize, of its award, he declared that when young Clement should have been through college, he would become one of whom Greenwich Town would be justly proud.

And no one, not even Jan herself, realized that it was all due to the January girl.

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